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OR,

THE VAILED VOYAGER'S MYSTERIOUS MISSION.

A Companion Story to "Red Wings, the
Gold-Seekers of the Bahamas."

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "MERLE, THE MUTINER," "MONTE-
ZUMA, THE MERCILESS," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE YOUNG SEA ROVER.

"Who is he, Carson?"

The question was asked by one young naval officer of another, as they stood upon the quarter-deck of the United States sloop-of-war Emerald at anchor in the harbor of Boston.

The one who was the cause of the question had just come on board with his kit, to take his place as a midshipman of the Emerald.

He was a dark-faced, handsome lad of about fifteen, with a form indicative of strength and activity, and an easy, graceful carriage, which had seemed at home on the quarter-deck, though he was but a new appointee in the service.

"SHE SAILS THREE MILES TO OUR TWO, AND THERE IS NO ESCAPE FOR US!"

In answer to the question of his brother officer the one addressed said:

"For some reason, Willis, there is a veil of secrecy or mystery held over Midshipman Claude Cassiday, for such is his name; but I heard something of him from an officer who served with him on board the Restless brig-of-war."

"Why, I thought he was a new man?"

"He is, or rather has just obtained his orders, but he was acting-middy on board the Restless on her run from the Bahamas under Captain Clifford Carr."

"Then he has seen service before?"

"From all accounts more than any man aboard the Emerald."

"There was an officer of his name once in the navy, a lieutenant I believe, and upon this very vessel."

"Yes, Willis, it was the boy's father, and he also, was appointed from the merchant service."

"As I heard it he commanded a West Indian trading schooner, and was among the Bahamas in a hurricane which caught the brig-of-war Saturn there and wrecked her, or rather caused her to spring a leak, which sunk her."

"Cassiday ran up with his schooner, and commanding a boat himself, took every man off the sinking brig and carried them to port."

He got a lieutenantcy for it and was ordered to this ship, which went on a cruise in the Gulf of Mexico.

"One day a party landed for water, under command of Lieutenant Harold Hartwell, the former commander of the lost Saturn, the crew of which Cassiday had saved."

"Cassiday went ashore as second in command and the party were attacked by Mexicans and forced to retreat."

"Cassiday received his death-wound, and bade Hartwell leave him to his fate, but, remembering how he had been rescued by the dying officer, the lieutenant remained by him until he died, and sent for aid to the Emerald, which helped him out of his trouble."

"And the midshipman is Lieutenant Cassiday's son, Carson?"

"Yes."

"And you say there is a mystery hanging over him?"

"Well, it seems that the boy, though but nine years of age, was with his father on his merchant schooner in the Bahamas, and when becalmed one day he rowed ashore alone in the gig, among the islands."

"A blow came up, as I heard it, and the schooner had to seek shelter under the lee of an island, and dark coming on, the search for the boy was put off until the next morning."

"Then he could not be found and he was given up as having been lost in the blow, though it is said that his father would never yield to that opinion, taking the idea that he had been captured by some of the Bahama Buccaneers."

"Which opinion, as the boy is here, was doubtless the correct one."

"It was."

"Ah! then the boy has had a romantic career?"

"Remarkably so."

"How long was he among the buccaneers?"

"What I tell you, remember, Willis, is *entre nous*, for it will not be pleasant for the young midddy to be referred to as a pirate, and he is very sensitive upon the subject, I learn."

"Certainly, and with cause; but, how long was he among the pirates?"

"Until a few months ago?"

"No!"

"Yes: he was held captive by Kent, the Buccaneer."

"Ah! the bold rover of the Red Wings?"

"The man who will fight a Spanish, French or British cruiser, but never fire upon an American vessel-of-war, no matter how closely pressed?"

"Yes, that is the man."

"But he cleverly captured the American brig-of-war Storm Bird, awhile ago?"

"Yes, the brig-of-war Restless, under Captain Carr, was pirate-hunting in the Bahamas, and anchored one night off an island where sure destruction would have followed as a hurricane came up, had not a young pilot swum out from the shore and run her into a harbor."

"That pilot was Claude Cassiday, and as he saved the vessel, through his act Kent the Buccaneer's retreat was taken, his Red Wings captured, and the band broken up."

"Soon after Captain Hartwell went there in the Storm Bird and found the island deserted, as he believed; but, Kent had escaped, with some of his crew, and when Hartwell and four-fifths of his crew camped ashore at night, he seized the brig and went out in her own boats, so those on board believed them to be the crew of their vessel coming off."

"He sent Hartwell and his crew home in a prize, and now has the Storm Bird renamed the Red Wings, as you know."

"And I suppose young Cassiday got his appointment for his services?"

"He did, and deserved it, too."

"If he had not really turned pirate."

"I believe he had been forced into piracy, yes, and he was made a *protege* of the chief; but, remember he was but a lad when taken,

and when he could do so he made his escape, and served the Government so well that Captain Clifford Carr and every officer and man on board the Restless, signed the petition for a midshipman's berth for him."

"And he got it?"

"Yes, and is to be our messmate for a cruise in Southern seas. In fact, I believe we are going upon a pirate hunt to the Bahamas."

"But, here comes Cassiday, having reported to the captain," and just then the one whom the two young officers had been discussing came out of the captain's quarters, accompanied by the senior midshipman of the sloop-of-war.

CHAPTER II.

A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

ONE pleasant afternoon on the eve of the present century, two vessels were standing along on a northerly course with the Bahama Islands astern of them.

There was a vast difference between the two, one being a lateen rig—a trim looking craft often seen in West Indian waters.

She was hardly over sixty tons burden and unarmed, though she carried a very large crew of officers and men, all wearing the uniform of the United States Navy of that time.

The vessel was running swiftly along, while upon her starboard quarter was the other craft referred to.

This was a brig-of-war as trim as a yacht, with great tall raking masts set far apart, long slender yards and a capacity for spreading as much canvas as a vessel twice her size.

Though the *goleta* was bowling along well under full sail, and was a fleet craft, too, the brig with only mainsail, foresail and jib set held her own to leeward with an ease that showed how quickly she would run away from the other did she cover herself with canvas as she was capable of doing.

The crew upon the brig were a vicious looking lot, representing several nationalities, for there were Spaniards, Mexicans, Portuguese, English, German, French and negroes, all bearing the stamp of crime and recklessness deeply imprinted on their faces.

Over the decks of the crowded *goleta* floated the United States flag, while above the brig was a sable flag fluttering from the peak, in the center of which were a huge pair of scarlet wings on either side of a red globe representing the world.

It would seem more fitting for the black flag to float over the lateen-rig craft, and the Stars and Stripes above the brig, but such was not the case.

Upon the deck of the brig, glancing at the smaller vessel from time to time, was a man whose name was just then a terror upon the seas, for he was a real sea rover—a black flag ocean bandit—none other than Kent the Buccaneer.

He was a man of striking appearance, with a face that was fascinating rather than handsome; milk-white teeth, which showed when he spoke, and gave him a sinister expression.

He was dressed in a blue uniform similar to that of the United States Navy, only with more gold-lace upon it, while upon his square shoulders were heavy epaulettes bearing the red wings upon them.

The same spread wings of scarlet were upon his hat, and about his slender waist was a sash, and a belt to which swung a sword of rare workmanship and value.

There were others near the buccaneer chief, also attired in the uniform of officers, but not of such gorgeous make-up.

The crew was a small one, hardly more than two-score, in striking contrast to the men of the *goleta*, who outnumbered them three to one.

But though the commander of the *goleta* would gladly have risked taking the brig by boarding, for his vessel was unarmed, he knew that the lesser speed of his vessel precluded such an act, and so was forced to sail quickly upon his course.

The situation was a strange one, for the beautiful brig-of-war was the Storm Bird—a vessel fitted out especially to hunt down Kent the Buccaneer, and the *goleta* was a small craft, which had been a prize of the pirates, given to the American sailors to return home in.

The captain of the Storm Bird, Harold Hartwell had landed upon the pirate island, for reasons which will hereafter appear, and that night he had mysteriously disappeared, and though the place was considered deserted, all search for him had proven in vain and his officers decided that he fallen from a caving cliff into the seas, whither his tracks had been traced.

The next night the Storm Bird had been seized by the buccaneers and standing out to sea had met the *goleta*, with which she had returned to the island harbor and then set the Americans free.

Soon after nightfall the brig had set more sail and walked by and away from the *goleta*.

After that she had been stripped of all canvas, and seemingly mysteriously disappeared from the waters, while the *goleta* went by, all at a loss to know what had become of their captured vessel.

But, the *goleta* out of sight, the brig had headed back over the course she had come.

It was after sunrise she had held steadily in toward a large island which presented to the eye no break in the coast; yet when very near a headland was seen putting out like a huge arm forming the narrow entrance to a small harbor within the island.

The brig glided in swiftly, shortening sail as she went, and soon dropped anchor off the shore.

Not a soul was visible upon the island, though it presented the appearance of having been lately occupied.

"It is strange that Ferris does not show himself, Rapier," remarked Captain Kent, addressing his first officer.

"Yes sir, he must have seen us return, unless he is asleep."

"I will send Officer Santo ashore—no, I will go myself, for who knows but that the treasure that American captain came to the Bahama Islands to find, may be upon this very island?" and Captain Kent gave an order to lower away a boat and was soon upon the shore.

He went up the steep path to the spot where were the ruins of lately destroyed cabins, his own retreat, and continued on until he came to a ridge that was near the center of the island.

From this arose a cone-shaped mound upon which grew a dense thicket, and against which towered a tall tree.

From a branch of this tree hung a rope ladder, but as though not caring to ascend, the chief called out loudly:

"Ho, Ferris! Arouse yourself!"

But no answer came to his call, repeated as it was several times.

"Can the prisoner have killed him and escaped?"

Up the ladder then he went to the limb of the tree to which it was attached, and walking along this, as upon the yard-arm of a ship, he stepped out upon the cone and disappeared in the thicket, when he came upon a large cavern showing signs of having been recently occupied.

But it was unoccupied now.

Loudly the chief called, but only the echoes of his own voice responded.

"He must have gone to the shore by another path," he decided, and hastily retraced his way.

But, his boat's crew awaiting there, had seen no one.

Then in trumpet tones he hailed the brig:

"Ho, Rapier! the prisoner and his keeper have escaped. Send the crew ashore to make search for them!"

CHAPTER III.

THE CHASE.

FIFTEEN minutes after the order of Buccaneer Kent, thirty men were spreading over the island in search of two persons who had mysteriously disappeared.

These two were Captain Harold Hartwell of the brig-of-war Storm Bird, whom the pirates had captured three nights before while strolling upon the island, and Ferris, one of their band left in the secret retreat among the rocks to guard the captive.

The brig had returned especially for the pirate guard and his prisoner, and now they could not be found.

Captain Kent directed the search, but hours passed and every man came in with the same report—the two men could not be found.

Captain Kent's face wore a troubled look, and he called his officers about him for a consultation.

"Senors," he said, "I am sure that Captain Hartwell could have been forced to divulge a secret which would have enriched us. You are aware that he has thrice before been among these islands. Once he came as the commander of a small brig-of-war, the Saturn, which was wrecked here by a hurricane."

"Then he came here with a schooner, unarmed and with but a dozen men for a crew, and that craft you, Senor Santo, captured. He was then known as Captain Harold."

"My boy *protege*, Pinto, aided him to escape with the few men left of his crew; but he deserted the lad, after all, as most of you know; then he returned here under an assumed name, and in a small but swift merchant schooner, to find the treasure."

"After a few months he came again, in another schooner, but went away without accomplishing his purpose, and I believe it was because he found us occupying this island."

"You think, then, Senor Chief, his treasure is still upon this island?"

"Yes, Santo, that is my theory."

"But a fourth time he comes here, and in the magnificent armed brig which is now our prize—the beautiful Storm Bird."

"He came to do the work which Captain Carr, with the brig Restless, had been ahead of him in doing—namely, breaking up our retreat and lying in wait and capturing the Red Wings when she ran into the island harbor."

"Now I am convinced his officers know nothing of this treasure, for nothing else than to get a treasure which he has discovered the hiding-place of in some way, has brought Captain Hartwell here under an assumed name in a

small vessel, and again as commander of a fine vessel-of-war.

"We were so fortunate as to capture his splendid vessel, and after escorting his crew to sea in the *goleta*, I hoped to come back and force from him, under the threatened penalty of death, the secret of where his treasure is hidden. We returned, however, to find our prisoner gone, and also his guard.

"Now, I supposed I could trust Ferris, but I surely believe he was tempted by a large bribe offered by Hartwell, to let him escape, while he went out in the brig to meet you, Rapier, when you were coming in with the *goleta*."

"That is it, chief, and Ferris went with the captain on the *goleta*," cried Officer Santo.

"So I believe, and I shall at once crowd on all sail in chase of the *goleta* in spite of her long start.

"You, Senor Benito, I wish to remain with four men, in case they should be in hiding here, and capture them, awaiting our return for you."

"Yes, Senor Chief."

"But, if Captain Hartwell resists, should you find him, under no circumstances, kill, or harm him, for the secret he holds is too valuable, and would perish with him."

"I hope we may find them here, chief," said Benito.

"Well, you must lie in hiding, and if they are here when they see the brig sail away they will come out.

"Now let us get on board the brig and go in chase of the *goleta*."

The officers followed their chief to the boats, and soon after the brig went flying seaward out of the island harbor.

Once she had secured sea-room she crowded on all sail, and the manner in which she flew through the waters made the crew cheer with admiration of their prize.

"The lieutenant in command stated that he would go to the Delaware, so head for there, Senor Rapier," ordered the chief, and he added:

"Drive the brig for all there is in her. If we find she has not put into the Delaware, I shall run down the coast, hoping to meet her."

Thus the brig held on her course, driven by day and by night. The winds held her fair, as though to aid in her overhauling the *goleta*.

But, though sail after sail was sighted, the moment it was seen not to be a lateen rig, the brig held on.

Vessels were overhauled and passed by the flying brig in a way that astonished their crews, and at night, as she would sail by, the superstitious sailors would whisper to each other that she could be no other than the "Flying Dutchman."

Many a rich prize was doubtless thus passed, the buccaneer chief anxious only to overhail the *goleta* and take from her the man whom he felt sure held the secret to where an enormous treasure could be found.

The beautiful brig, flaunting her sable flag to the breeze, reached the Delaware, and bringing to a pilot boat and several fishing vessels, learned the same story from all, that the *goleta* had not passed into the river.

So the Red Wings, as the buccaneer chief had rechristened his fleet prize, was headed southward and ran leisurely down the coast.

Here and there she picked up a prize, but the chief was after larger game and every eye was kept on the watch for the *goleta*.

A few reckless men were found on the various prizes who were willing to link their fortunes with the free rover, and thus the small crew of the Red Wings was enlarged by a score of additional seamen, which was of some satisfaction to Captain Kent.

Leaving Abaco to the starboard, the brig ran down the chain of Bahama Islands for the old retreat of the buccaneers, and, after a very quick voyage, ran in one night and dropped anchor in the little harbor.

There was a lingering hope in the mind of Captain Kent that the prisoner and his guard might not have left the island in the *goleta*, and that Officer Benito would have them in custody awaiting his return.

But, this hope was dashed to the ground when he saw Senor Benito and learned from him that no trace of the missing ones had been found.

"I shall still hold this island as my retreat, and more, I shall search every part of it for that treasure.

"But first, let me get a crew worthy of my vessel and pick up a few rich prizes to pay us for all we have lost," and then came the order for the Red Wings to spread her sails on a lawless cruise.

CHAPTER IV.

KEEPING A SECRET.

OVER the blue waves of the Atlantic Ocean, bound upon a northern course, flew the lateen-rig craft, which had been escorted out of the Bahama waters by the buccaneer chief, Kent, in his beautiful prize brig which he had renamed the Red Wings.

The *goleta*, in spite of her heavy load of humanity, went along at a swift pace, and her commander kept her crowded with canvas, blow it hard or light.

That commander sat in the luxurious after-cabin of the craft, which had been built as a yacht for a Cuban planter, and left the management of the vessel to the officer next in rank to himself, except stipulating that the *goleta* should be driven for all she was worth.

He seemed worried and ill at ease, and had the sympathy of his officers and men, who did not attach to him the blame of his misfortunes.

He had gone out with the splendid brig with seemingly every hope of success upon his mission.

He had reached the pirate stronghold to find that a brother captain had been there before him, and he had fallen into the hands of the Philistines himself and coolly heard their plot to capture his vessel.

But, after the capture of his vessel he had led the single guard left over him into temptation, and his promise of a pardon for his crimes as a buccaneer and a rich reward had secured for him his freedom from captivity.

The two, the guard and his prisoner, had in the dress of common sailors gone on board the *goleta*, and Captain Harold Hartwell was in great fear, lest, the buccaneer chief discovering his escape, would come in pursuit of the little vessel, and thus had given the order to his lieutenant to crowd on sail and keep the craft at her best pace.

Now, seated in his cabin one night, while the seas ran high and the *goleta* was struggling along through the rough waters, under pressure of more canvas than was really safe to carry, Captain Harold Hartwell was lost in deepest meditation.

At last he started as the gangway door leading forward softly opened and a man appeared there.

"Come in, Ferris, and lock the door behind you," he said nervously, and the man obeyed.

The intruder was a thick-set man with a blonde complexion and the stamp of Anglo-Saxon strongly seen upon every feature.

He was dressed as a common sailor and yet entered the cabin of the captain with the air of one who meant to feel upon terms of equality with the occupant.

"You asked me to come here, senor," he said, using the *senor* from long habit living among Spaniards.

"Did any one see you come in?"

"No, senor; I did as you asked me to do—came as quietly as I could."

"All right. Sit down, Ferris."

"Why so much secrecy about my coming to your cabin, senor?"

"Because I wished to talk to you before reaching port."

"In regard to the division of the treasure?"

"Yes."

"You are the only one who knows of its existence, senor, you said?"

"Yes, the only one."

"And I am to have half of it?"

"You are, for so I promised you."

"And my pardon?"

"Yes."

"Of course, senor, if you report me as having been forced into piracy, as you said, I will need a pardon only as a matter of form, which will be useful should I be recognized some day."

"You shall have the pardon, Ferris."

"And now will we get the treasure, senor?"

"That is what I wished to talk with you about now."

"I am all attention, senor."

"Well, when I return I shall have to report the loss of my vessel, as it occurred, and my escape through your aid."

"I may be at once ordered to sea in a subaltern's position, for my rank of captain was contingent upon my capture of the buccaneer chief, his vessel and his stronghold."

"The naval secretary will doubtless be so angry at the loss of the brig that he will order me to duty as a lieutenant on some vessel on which I may have a ranking lieutenant as well as a captain."

"If he does so I shall resign, and then I shall at once charter a small craft in which we can go to the Bahamas, you serving as my mate."

"Yes, senor; but, if you do not resign?"

"Then I shall feign illness, ask for an extended leave, and go upon our trip after the treasure."

"Suppose you are allowed to hold your present rank, and are given a ship for another cruise?"

"Ah! that is the very thing, for in that case I must trust you to secure the treasure for me."

"Senor Captain, I must thank you for this confidence, and it forces me to confess to you that I have doubted you."

"Doubted me, Ferris?" and Captain Hartwell's dark face flushed as with anger.

"Yes, senor, I feared that you intended telling me that the treasure was all a myth, giving me my pardon, a small sum in money and telling me to go my way in peace."

"You are frank to confess your doubt of me, Ferris, and I hope there will be no more of it now."

"There shall not be, senor."

"To reassure you, I will confess that a brother officer, who once saved my life, was killed in

Mexico, and while dying he told me of the treasure, leaving it to me.

"As you now know the secret, and understand the islands thoroughly, I will show you the chart he gave me."

"Here it is; so study it out— Ah! what a rough night it is, and how the *goleta* frets," added Captain Hartwell, as the roaring of the winds and waves resounded loudly and the little vessel pitched wildly.

"It is a bad night, senor, but the craft behaves well— Ah! this is the chart," and steadying himself at the table, Ferris spread it before him, while Captain Hartwell arose and said:

"I will get you the key to the chart, and remember, Ferris, the secret must be kept inviolate."

"It will be as safe with me, senor, as though in the grave," was the remark of the buccaneer, and he bent over the chart.

As he did so Captain Hartwell passed quickly behind him; his hand was suddenly up-thrown, then descended with a thud upon the head of the buccaneer, who dropped forward, stunned, upon the table.

At once raising the now unconscious man in his arms, Hartwell bore it toward the starboard sternport. This he threw open, and let the body fall into the wake of the flying vessel.

"That keeps my secret," he said with savage triumph, as he closed the port, unlocked the companionway door and resumed his seat, his face as pallid as that of a corpse.

CHAPTER V.

FOR THE SAKE OF GOLD.

THE home of Captain Harold Hartwell was a handsome one. It was furnished in a most luxurious manner for the abiding place of a naval officer who had his pay only to depend upon.

But then, rumor had it that Mrs. Hartwell had been left a large fortune, and the busy-bodies went no further in their inquiries.

While Captain Hartwell was absent upon his pirate-hunting cruise, the mansion was closed to fashionable visitors, Mrs. Hartwell complaining of ill health, though she had the appearance of being a woman whose health was perfect.

She was handsome, queenly, an aristocrat and as ambitious as Lucifer.

She had married Hartwell believing that he would inherit a fortune, which however failed to materialize according to her expectations, and he had asked her to become his wife confident that she was an heiress, for such she was said to be; but this also proved to be only rumor.

They had, however, in the past year or so, enlarged their house, refurnished it, beautified their grounds, and Mrs. Hartwell had come out resplendent in the rarest jewels, and this, it was said, all came from the fortune left them by some old relative who had shuffled off this mortal coil for their benefit.

They had one child, a beautiful little daughter of nine years of age, at the time the reader is presented to the Hartwells, and her nature was sunny-hued, her character lovely as her face.

She stood somewhat in awe of her stately, ambitious mother, and adored her handsome sailor father with all her heart, though she could not understand why of late when at home he had seemed austere and often fretted.

One afternoon Mrs. Hartwell was walking slowly up and down the broad piazza, her eyes upon the fine view yet scarcely seeming to behold it, when suddenly a town carriage rolled up to the gate and a man sprung out.

Mrs. Hartwell uttered a slight cry, pressed her hand upon her breast, as though to still its rapid beating and murmured:

"It is my husband! Heaven grant he has met with success."

Harold Hartwell dismissed his carriage, came quickly up the walk and Mrs. Hartwell mused aloud:

"How pale he is, and how worried he looks!"

The greeting between the two was rather formal than affectionate, and seeming to forget that she was an invalid, Mrs. Hartwell led the way to the library at a very quick pace, locked the door after they had entered it, and facing her husband said quickly:

"Well?"

"It is not well, for I have lost my vessel," and the officer dropped into a chair like one wholly despondent.

"Lost your vessel?" quickly repeated his wife.

"Yes."

"But the treasure is safe?"

"Yes."

The woman gave a cry of joy.

"Then what do you care for the vessel, for that belongs to the Government?" she urged.

"Well, I do care, for I lost it under circumstances which not only brought me a reprimand, but returns me to my old rank as lieutenant, while I am ordered to sea with two over me in rank, and I suppose I am to be sent upon a long cruise to foreign seas."

"This is bad, for it will prevent your securing the treasure?"

"Yes, for the present."

"You are sure the treasure is safe?" anxiously asked Mrs. Hartwell.

"Perfectly."

"Well, knowing that, I can serenely listen to your story of how you made a fool of yourself, Hartwell."

"You are severe."

"Well, perhaps so, but just, for you went away from here under flying colors, commanding a splendid vessel, and with all in your favor, while you had the brevet rank of captain."

"You return afoot and with the information that the *brevet* is taken from you and your vessel is lost, while, with a captain and lieutenant over you, a cruise to foreign seas has been decided for you."

"I think I am just, Hartwell, in saying that you have made a fool of yourself."

The man winced under the calm sarcasm of his wife, but said:

"You know that I did my best to get the treasure, that I went twice under an assumed name in a small vessel, once to be captured by the buccaneers—"

"Yes, and that was a boon to you, for by the aid of some boy, whom you confess to have deserted, you escaped from the island in a craft containing the treasure of the outlaws, and which, certainly, helped us amazingly, though it was not of the amount I could wish."

"Well, you made a grand splurge with it, and have some very rare jewels to-day that you are proud of stating are old family heirlooms," sneered the officer.

"Yes, and I hope to find more in this treasure which you have failed to get."

"This treasure which was found by poor Claude Cassiday, who, when dying in Mexico, gave me his secret and bade me share the fortune equally with his family and myself—this treasure which you tempted me to say nothing about to Cassiday's family, and take all for myself."

"I yielded to the temptation, and to possess it I have committed murder again and again, and I left upon a barren island the very boy who saved us from the buccaneers, whom I, upon my second cruise, picked up at sea and recognized as the lost son of Claude Cassiday."

"Ah! the boy was his son then?"

"Yes, taken by the pirates and made one of them."

"And you left him on a barren island?"

"Yes, he had escaped from the buccaneers in a small boat, and I picked him up, found out that he was Claude Cassiday's son, so got rid of him."

"And he died there?"

"I supposed so until my return, when I find that he was found there by the buccaneer chief, carried back to his stronghold, and one night of storm swam out and saved the brig-of-war *Reckless* from destruction by piloting her into a safe anchorage."

"This gained for him a midshipman's berth."

"Ha! and he will denounce you?"

"No, for then I was known as Captain Harold, a merchant coaster's skipper; but I shall grow my beard and keep clear of the lad for some years, so that he may not recognize me."

"A pretty mess you have made of the whole affair; but you cannot back out now, so you must get that treasure, Hartwell, the moment you can do so."

"I will do this, for once I gain possession of it my riches will gain me influence with the Government."

"Yes, and enable me to live in the splendid style it has been my ambition to enjoy."

"You have sinned to get the treasure, Hartwell, and there must be no backdown now, or I'll have to get it."

"You?"

"Yes, for I have copies of all your charts of where the treasure lies hidden, so if you do not act I will!"

"Give me until I return from the cruise I am now ordered upon," said the man, very uneasy at his wife's bold stand.

After a full minute of thought she answered:

"Yes, I will give you the time you ask."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MIDSHIPMAN.

SOME time prior to his going on board the sloop-of-war, as a midshipman newly appointed, and "for gallant and most valuable services rendered," Claude Cassiday, the young sailor over whom Lieutenant Willis had said a mystery hung—as we recorded in our opening chapter—was seated upon the piazza of his own house.

It was a pretty cottage, with a view of the bay, and a flower-garden and lawn which added to its attractiveness.

On one side was the city of Boston, and in front the grand, island-dotted bay, with the ocean stretching away into limitless space in the distance.

The occupants of the house had been, until the return of the young rover, so long regarded dead, the wife and daughter of Lieutenant Claude Cassiday, and an old and faithful servant.

An air of comfort reigned over all, for the lieutenant had not left his family destitute, though they little dreamed of the hidden pirate

treasure which he had found on an island of the Bahamas, and willed them as a legacy, generously giving his brother officer, Harold Hartwell, half of the fortune for the getting of it.

Since, when her husband as captain of a West Indian trader, had lost their little son off the Bahamas, Mrs. Cassiday had mourned her boy as dead.

Then came, nearly two years after, the death of her husband in Mexico, and Mrs. Cassiday, with only little Helen left to her, determined to devote the remainder of her life to the care and education of her daughter, and not to cast a shadow upon her young life, she kept back the tears that constantly welled up from her heart.

But one afternoon a handsome lad of fifteen, clad in the uniform of a midshipman, had come to the cottage, and the keen eyes of little Helen had recognized her brother Claude.

Could this dashing young sailor be her boy, whom she remembered as a lad of nine, when he had sailed upon the fateful voyage on which he had so mysteriously disappeared?

Could the loved boy, whom she had mourned as dead for long years, be alive after all, and grown to be a youth of fifteen, handsome and noble-looking?

There was no doubt of it in the mother's heart, after she had heard him talk and gazed into his splendid eyes.

Both she and little Helen listened in awe, admiration and wonder commingled, as the young sailor told them of the strange life he had led.

He told them how, when his father's schooner was becalmed among the Bahamas, he had taken the gig and gone among the islands to seek for shelter, but a strong current had borne him away, a storm had come on, followed by night, and he had sought refuge upon another island.

Taking to his boat again the next morning, he had drifted about for days, when, almost dead with hunger and thirst, he had been picked up by an armed schooner.

The captain had treated him well, and promised to some day take him home; but he soon learned that the vessel was a pirate craft.

To the stronghold of the buccaneers he was taken, and alternating between life on the island and retreat and cruising in the pirate schooner, the years had passed.

The chief, Captain Kent, had ever been most kind to him, making him his *protege* and giving him a place as junior officer, while the outlawed people also treated him with the greatest kindness.

Still he longed for his home, and those he loved, and made up his mind to escape whenever opportunity offered.

He had been left upon the island on one cruise, when a small schooner came in for an anchorage one afternoon, to escape a storm.

The crew did not suspect the presence of the pirates, and so fell an easy prey to an attack that night, only the captain and four men being taken prisoners.

These the lad determined to aid to escape, himself accompanying them.

As he was thought to be at heart a pirate he was not suspected, and so managed to plan for the prisoners to escape in a sloop in a secret basin of the island.

He both planned and executed well, but after leading the men to the basin he went to cut the schooner adrift, so that she would go ashore and could not be used in pursuit of them, when he was cruelly deserted by those whom he had saved.

Another, Miguel Santo, was suspected of freeing the prisoners, and would have been hanged by the Island Captain, but for the lad's confessing that he was the guilty one.

Santo was then freed, the lad imprisoned and held to await the return of the chief.

But the schooner under the Island Captain sailed in pursuit of the fugitives, and Santo aided the boy to escape, fitting out a whale-boat for him.

Weeks after he was picked up near Abaco by the very man, Captain Harold, who had made good his escape and at once returned in another vessel to secure the treasure which had brought him to the Bahamas.

The treacherous man had told him his crew had forced him to desert him, and he had believed the story, trusted him and been taken ashore on a barren island and again deserted.

There, days after, Kent the Buccaneer had landed to fill his water-casks and found him, and he had been pardoned by the chief, to whom he confessed all, and with him returned to the island stronghold.

So a year passed away in cruising, and once in battle on the pirate schooner, he had been wounded and was left by the chief at the island retreat to recover.

While there a vessel-of-war, a brig flying the Stars and Stripes, had anchored off the island and lowered her boats to send them ashore.

The buccaneers prepared to beat them off, but a storm threatening, the boats were recalled and the brig prepared to meet the tempest.

But the young man knew that her anchors would drag upon the hard bottom, and the vessel would be wrecked, with all on board, so, as soon as it was dark, he swam out to the vessel

and boarded her, offering to pilot her to an anchorage where she would be safe.

This he did, though the tempest raged fiercely, and the next morning the retreat of the buccaneers was captured, along with the schooner at anchor there, which had been taken from Captain Harold.

And the brig lay in wait at the island for the coming of Buccaneer Kent, and his vessel also was captured, though the lad aided the chief to escape, in return for the kindnesses he had shown to him.

Returning in the brig to the United States, young Claude Cassiday had been given the warrant of a midshipman for the services he had rendered, and then, with a generous leave granted him, had gone to see his mother and sister, who had so long regarded him as dead.

Such was the story of the young midshipman, and I may add that he came home with a considerable sum of money he had saved up, which he gave into his mother's keeping, and promptly, when his leave expired, reported for duty on board the American sloop-of-war *Emerald*, the very vessel on which his father had been serving as a lieutenant when losing his life in Mexico, and giving, when dying, the secret of the hidden treasure to Harold Hartwell, who had been tempted by his wife to betray the trust placed in him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VAILED VISITOR.

A JEW money-lender sat in his dingy office one night, after hours, figuring up his profits of the day, as was his custom and delight, for he generally managed to get a very large balance in his own favor.

He claimed to be a bachelor, and kept house with a couple of children whom he said he would rear and educate, while in reality they were his own, his wife having died soon after the birth of the youngest, her boy.

But Moses Gripstein argued that if they knew they were his children, they would expect to live in luxury and inherit his large fortune, while if he reared them as simply distant kin, to whom he gave a home and education, and *might* leave a few hundreds to them, should death call him away, they would become hard-working, useful members of society.

The two children thus disowned were certainly models of goodness, and where Zephiah, a beautiful girl of sixteen, took full charge of the house, thus saving the expense of a servant, while she also managed to study hard as well, Emanuel, her brother of fourteen, was clerk and office-boy in the shop, and a faithful one, too—thus saving the wages of an outsider.

Old Gripstein had given the children his name, and he was by no means unkind to them, while he granted them a good living and the best second-hand clothes he had in his shop, for he kept everything, from cast-off clothing to gems of rare value.

The shop and a back office occupied the downstairs of the house, while above were the living rooms of the family, and no one seeing Gripstein in business hours would ever have suspected the luxurious manner in which he lived, for the diamond merchant was fond of his comfort.

"A lady to see you, uncle," said Emanuel, coming into the room where Gripstein was busy with his accounts.

"Vat for she comes now v'en dere vas no pizziness times, Emanuel?" asked the merchant sharply.

"She said that she came because it was not your business hours, uncle, as she wished to see you alone."

"Who vas she?"

"I do not know, uncle."

"Vas she a voman, Emanuel?"

"Yes, uncle."

"You vas sure she vas not a mans?" suspiciously asked Moses, who had read of a bold robbery perpetrated a short while before, by a man in female garb.

"She wears a dress and bonnet, uncle."

"Dot vas not always de sign, mine poy; but, show her in, and you come along behind to help me, if t'e voman vas a mans."

"Yes, uncle," and with a smile at the fears of the money broker, he returned to the outer door and bade a person waiting there to follow him.

It was a woman, dressed in mourning garb, and wearing an impenetrable black veil.

The Jew saw at a glance, from her elegant form, that he had no man to deal with, for her voice was soft and musical as she asked:

"Is this Merchant Gripstein the money-lender, sir?"

"It vas, madam, I vas Moses Gripstein, diamond merchant and money-lender; but dis vas not pizziness hours."

"No, sir; and I crave pardon, but I could not come by day as I wish to see you upon a very delicate matter."

"Ah! vas dot so? Emanuel, you may go, mine poy, for t'e ladies wishes to see me barticlar."

Emanuel, who stood at the door, took his departure, and Moses Gripstein, with the natural courtesy of his race, arose and placed a chair for his visitor, remarking:

"Take a seat, mees, and lay off your bonnet, for t'e room vas varm."

But this sly plan of Moses to see her face failed, as she said:

"Thank you, sir; I will sit, but I am not at all varm."

Moses bowed and resumed his seat, and the visitor said:

"I have come to see you, Mr. Gripstein, upon a matter of business, and to seek your aid."

"I vas so glad, mees."

"I need a certain sum of money—just how much you will have to determine for me."

"Of course, mees."

"I desire to send a vessel to southern seas on a sad errand—in fact, none other than to bring back the remains of one dearer to me than all else in the world."

"I vas so sorry, mees."

"He was buried upon an island of the Bahamas, and the isle and his grave I have a chart of; but what I do, I must do secretly—of course I can place confidence in you, sir."

"Every time, mees; I vas full of confidence."

"I will trust you, and say that it is a wish of my heart to go to this island and bring back the remains of my loved one."

"I must go myself, and yet I dare not let others into my secret, you understand?"

"Oh, yes, mees; I vas know it all," and Moses gave an assuring nod.

"I wish therefore to charter a small vessel, but one which is very fleet and seaworthy."

"Yes, mees, it can be done."

"A skipper, two mates, a cook and half a dozen seamen will be sufficient."

"It vas risky, mees, for t'e pirates vas awful pad now."

"The vessel must be so fleet she can run away from any pursuer. I desire her chartered for the voyage, for two or more months, and the cabin must be given up to me alone."

"Yes, mees."

"It must be well fitted up with comforts, and the vessel must be liberally stored with provisions."

"I understand, mees."

"Now I desire you to get the vessel for me, put her in trim, provisions and all."

"I will do it, mees."

"And more, Mr. Gripstein: I desire a coffin made."

"A coffins, mees?" cried Moses, looked startled.

"Yes, to bring back the remains of my dead—"

"Oh, yes, of coose, mees, you vill vant a coffins."

"Yes, a very stout one, and it must be put in the cabin of the vessel along with a pick, spade and shovel."

"Yes, I vas know."

"The craft must clear for a trading voyage along the coast, and her papers and all I depend upon you to secure."

"I vill do it, mees."

"Now, sir, as I cannot get the money to pay you, I have brought you my jewelry upon which to secure a loan. I will leave all with you, and you can get an estimate of the costs of the expedition, and then loan me the amount on my jewelry."

"It vill cost a great deal, mees, to charter a vessel, fit her out and pay t'e crews, not to speak of t'e coffins."

"I have my own idea of what the cost will be, sir."

"Den you vas know it must be fine gems dot vas wort' so mooch as you vas needs?"

"Here is the casket, so examine the contents for yourself," was the cold reply, and taking a box from beneath her veil she handed it over to the broker.

His eyes sparkled as he opened it and beheld a diamond necklace, emerald and ruby eardrops, with bracelets and rings a score in number, all containing the rarest and purest of gems.

"They represent many thousands of dollars, sir."

"Oh, yes, mees, t'e security vas blenty, and I vas do v'at you vant."

"Do so, and besides your interest on the loan I will pay you liberally for your work."

"In ten nights from this I will return," and the veiled visitor bowed and swept out of the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

MOSES STRIKES A BARGAIN.

MOSES GRIPSTEIN had a vessel in view when his veiled visitor told him what she wanted.

He was a timid man physically, though a very bold one in business, and on one occasion he had been run away with while riding in a stage-coach and nearly lost his life.

He had a branch office of his business in New York, and another in Portland, and these necessitated a visit or two each year.

It was while returning from Portland that the runaway occurred and Moses Gripstein had vowed by his old-time namesake never to ride in a public coach again.

So he purchased a carriage and pair of horses, and drove to New York when duty called him there.

Upon his way back he was halted by a robber

and a bag of gold taken from him after he had been nearly frightened out of his wits.

So Mr Gripstein sold his horses and carriage and bought a little schooner which had been built for a Cuban planter, who had paid half down upon it.

Word came of the Cuban's death, so the builders sold it to Mr. Gripstein for a very cheap figure.

A safe skipper was secured, a faithful crew, and Moses put his yacht, as he called it, into the coast trading business, only going in her himself to and fro when duty called him either to New York or Portland.

He had once made the trip in a packet schooner, and a pirate had given chase, and Moses was terribly alarmed; but the captain ran inshore, when urged by Mr. Gripstein to do so, the urging being accompanied by a very liberal souvenir in gold.

With his own vessel, and his own skipper Moses could keep close inshore, running for a harbor if a storm threatened or a suspicious sail was sighted, and so he felt happy.

Now it was this craft, the Zophiel, which he intended to charter for his veiled visitor.

He had a skipper, a mate, half a dozen seamen and a good cook on board.

Then the schooner could show her heels to anything that had ever crossed her wake at sea, her captain being a bold and skillful commander who went far out when the owner was not on board to hamper him.

The cabin was large and most comfortable, and the Zophiel paid for herself handsomely.

After the departure of his visitor Moses put aside his figuring on profits, and began to add up the cost of chartering a vessel.

He added to the captain's wages thirty dollars a month, and, in proportion, to the mates' and seamen's.

Then he put the amount of charter money a few hundreds over what the average earnings of the schooner was per month.

He made a generous bill of "stores," determined to get a commission from the merchant where he bought them, pretending they were not for him.

Next he made out a bill of "extras," which included new canvas, rigging and other things necessary for a long voyage, though the skipper kept his craft always in perfect trim.

"Luxuries" and "comforts" for the unknown lady were liberally charged for, and then he added it all up together and seemed pleased at the result.

Late as it was Emanuel was sent out to price coffins, and upon his return Moses selected the style which he considered would best suit the occasion and determined to get a commission upon the casket for the ashes of the dear departed who had found a grave so far away, and one who loved him so well that his remains were to be brought back to the land of his birth.

The next morning Moses sallied forth to see the provision merchant and undertaker, and he was pleased with the bargain he struck with them.

His little schooner had just come into port that morning, and going aboard he consulted his skipper about the voyage.

The skipper was willing to go if a packet could be put on in place of the Zophiel so as not to lose the trade already built up.

So another vessel was chartered, Moses driving a close bargain, and the Zophiel went on the ways for an overhauling.

Upon the day specified by his veiled visitor the pretty craft came off in splendid trim.

That night the veiled visitor again called, and as before she was dressed in deep mourning and wore the long veil which Mr. Gripstein had such a longing desire to penetrate.

Moses received his visitor most graciously, for his respect arose according to his profits, and he had figured out for himself a very handsome amount as coming to him.

He considered the lady as single, one who had loved a young man beneath her, perhaps secretly married him, and whose body she was anxious to have near, while she had to do all in secret for some reason or other known to herself.

Not daring to ask her father for the money she determined to raise it upon her jewels.

Such was Moses's idea of the affair, and he set her down as of aristocratic and rich parentage, as the sets of jewelry were very rare in workmanship, and exceedingly valuable.

In vain had Mr. Gripstein sought some mark upon them, a crest, a name or something to discover the owner by.

In this he was disappointed, for he wished to know with whom he was dealing.

He however met his visitor pleasantly, placed a chair for her and said:

"I vas glad to see you, mees, and I have looked over t'e gems most careful."

"And you know their value?"

"Vell, it vas approximate about twelve thousand tollars," and the smile kept back the knowledge of Moses that they were worth more than twenty thousand.

"And the cost of this voyage, sir?" asked the visitor in an unmoved way.

"I have found a most beautiful sheep, mees,

and it has a fine cabins, and a captains so safe, and blenty of provisions and all vas ready ven you vant him."

"I certainly feel indebted to you, sir; but, what will be the cost of the voyage?"

"Here vas my pilles, mees, of everythings," and Moses showed the charter price, wages of skipper and crew, fitting out for sea voyage, provisions and extras.

"In all, seven thousand dollars, be the voyage two or three months?"

"Yes, mees."

"And the interest on your advance?"

"Five per cent. a month, mees."

"And for your trouble, sir?"

"I vill only charge you two hundred tollars, mees."

"Make the loan eight thousand, take out all expenses and give me the balance."

Moses obeyed.

"Now have the vessel ready the third night from this."

"I will drive here with my luggage, and you can accompany me on board."

"I vill be ready, mees," and having handed over the amount above "expenses," Mr. Gripstein escorted his visitor to the door, after which he called to Emanuel and bade him follow her to her dwelling-place.

CHAPTER IX.

THE VAILED VOYAGER.

EMANUEL, in obedience to his uncle's command, at once darted out of the door in pursuit of the veiled visitor, intending to track her to her house.

To his amazement and alarm he darted almost up against her in the darkness.

"Ah, excuse me, miss, for the light blinded me," he said in apology.

"You were sent to follow me."

"Oh no, miss," came the ready protest.

"Did your uncle wish to see me?"

"No, miss."

"Did I leave any money, or not pay enough?"

"Oh, that is all right, miss," said the confused Emanuel.

"Then go back and tell your uncle that I will not be followed, and if you do follow me it will be at your peril. Go now!"

There was no mistaking the tone and manner, and Emanuel raised the brass knocker to gain admission to his house once more, where he at once made his report, leaving the visitor to go on her way unmolested.

"Vell, I vas sorry dot she finds oud I wants to know who she vas," said Moses Gripstein, considerably broken up at Emanuel's report of the affair.

But at the appointed time a carriage rolled up to the Jew's door and the driver knocked and bade Emanuel say that a lady awaited for Mr. Gripstein.

That person soon came down, muffled up to protect himself from the night air, and gave the driver directions where to go.

Then he entered and was coldly greeted by the lady on the back seat, and who was so seated as to leave no room for him.

So Moses took the front seat and greeted the lady in a pleasant way.

"You have all in readiness I hope, sir?"

"Yes, mees."

"You are sure the vessel is a fleet one?"

"She sails so like t'e wind, mees."

"And her skipper is reliable?"

"Oh, yes, mees."

"And the coffin?"

"Vas on board in t'e cabins, mees."

Soon after the carriage drew up at the end of the wharf and the two got out, while the driver took off two trunks belonging to the lady.

A boat awaited and the coxswain stepped forward and saluted the Jew, who led the way down the steps, after telling the driver to await and carry him back.

To this the lady made no objection and Moses muttered:

"I vas find out now who she vas."

The vessel lay a cable's length off-shore and as the boat approached the lady seemed to view it most critically for she remarked:

"That is a beautiful craft, Mr. Gripstein."

"You have done well."

"Ah, yes, mees, I vas always do vell," was the reply of the Jew, and he told only the truth.

Skipper Deering, a fine-looking man of half a hundred years, met the boat at the gangway and gallantly lifted the lady to the deck, giving her a bluff, but hearty welcome.

"Mr. Gripstein says you are to be my passenger, lady, so command me, my vessel and crew," he said as he led the way to the cabin.

The voyager uttered an exclamation of surprised admiration when she beheld the after cabin which was to be all her own.

It was large, handsomely furnished, wholly separate from the forward cabin and she felt that her quarters were to be certainly most comfortable.

The captain had done all in his power to make his passenger comfortable, and his heart went out to her in sympathy, for Mr. Gripstein had given him his idea of the situation.

She thanked him warmly, saw her trunks brought into the cabin, said that she was ready

to sail and bade Moses Gripstein farewell, with a word of thanks for his kindness.

Moses took his departure, but waited on deck for the coming of the captain, who had lingered behind and said:

"Now, lady, your orders please?"

"Get under way, and lay your course for Abaco, at the western end of the Bahama Islands."

"Yes, lady," and the captain went on deck muttering: "She's been to sea before, that is certain."

"Vell, she give you her orders, Skipper Deering?" queried the Jew who stood at the gangway.

"Yes, sir; I head for the Bahamas."

"Vell, make your run, so fast as you vas able, so as to get pack to pizziness, mine fri'nt, for t'is vas not pizziness."

"I'll do my best, sir, and hope to report to you my return before two months. Good-by, sir," and Captain Deering helped the broker into his boat, which at once pulled shoreward.

Then he gave orders for sail to be set and the anchor to be gotten up, and by the time the boat came back from the shore the vessel was ready to depart.

The voyager, still wearing her morning garb and heavy black veil, came on deck and stood near the man at the tiller, gracefully leaning on the taffrail.

She studied the vessel with the eye of one who recognized its fine points, and said, as the skipper came aft and took the wheel, after having the boat hauled up to its davits:

"This schooner is indeed a beautiful craft, Captain Deering, and looks both stanch and fleet."

"She is both, lady—but I beg pardon; Mr. Gripstein did not give me your name."

"The same as yours, captain—Miss Deering," was the answer.

"Ah! I would be proud to claim kindred, miss."

"Well, a namesake, if not a kinswoman, Captain Deering; but I am in love with your vessel for she is fairly flying along, and the wind is hardly blowing over a six-knot breeze."

"We are making all of eight, Miss Deering, but as you say the Zophiel flies along."

"She does indeed, and I feel cheered to think there will be little danger of being overhauled by a pirate."

"I have been chased by several buccaneers, Miss Deering, but fleet as their vessels were the Zophiel dropped them out of sight, though she is a small craft, being only forty tons."

"But I take it you have been to sea before?"

"Yes, sir," and as though not wishing to be questioned the voyager walked forward and continued pacing the deck until Boston Light was dropped astern over the starboard quarter when she retired to her cabin.

In the mean time Moses Gripstein had gone ashore and at once said to the driver of the vehicle:

"Here, my man's, dere vas a gold piece for you, so tell me who vas t'e ladys you have drive just now?"

"I don't know, sir."

"You don't vas know?"

"No, sir."

"Vare you vas git her?"

"At the tavern, sir."

"Vell, you drive me dere and den go and find out who she vas."

This order was obeyed, but all that could be learned was that the veiled lady had come to the vehicle in a carriage which had at once driven off, and half an hour after she had ordered another vehicle to carry her away.

So Mr. Gripstein was foiled after all in his effort to discover who the Veiled Voyager was.

CHAPTER X.

A SAIL IN SIGHT.

If Captain Deering had cherished the hope that his lady passenger would unvail once she had gotten to sea, he found himself disappointed, for she arose late, called for her breakfast and dismissed the steward as soon as he had brought it.

She was very courteous, gave him a gold piece, but he failed to see her face.

After breakfast she went on deck, and Captain Deering saw that she still wore her heavy veil, which prevented her face from being seen at all: in fact as she also wore gloves, the skipper could not tell even if she were white or black.

She gazed upward at the well-drawing sails, then forward and noted the speed of the vessel.

The skipper welcomed her cordially, and she returned his greeting with a pleasant "good-morning, sir," and then walked forward, bowing courteously to each one of the men as she met them and halting at the caboose where she gave a few instructions to the colored cook regarding her meals.

Then she returned aft, and seating herself in a cabin-chair brought on deck settled herself to the full enjoyment of the sail.

Thus the time went by, the voyager proving herself a splendid sailor, for she remained on deck half one night in a storm, and not once had the slightest sign of sea-sickness.

After having studied her chart thoroughly, she explained to Captain Deering just about the latitude and longitude of the island she sought, and the schooner was put away for that point, though the skipper said:

"It is a dangerous locality, Miss Deering."

"In what respect?"

"In more respect than one."

"May I ask what the dangers are?"

"The latitude is frequently visited by tornadoes, and there are few harbors which we can seek, while we may also expect to come across some of the Bahama Buccaneers."

"We must guard against the tornadoes as best we can, and run away from the pirates, Captain Deering."

"You are a very plucky lady, Miss Deering, and we will do our best to serve you."

"But, captain, suppose the island I seek should be occupied as a retreat by these buccaneers?" and the lady spoke in an almost startled way, as the thought that such might be the case suddenly dawned upon her.

"Well, in that case we must know before we land."

"And if there are but a few we must fight them."

"These Bahama Buccaneers are ugly fighters, Miss Deering, and we must be careful unless the odds are in our favor."

"Captain Deering, should the island I seek be held by buccaneers, then we must sail for the nearest port where you can get a crew and arm them, so as to return and take possession."

"It will cost considerable to ship a crew, Miss Deering, though it can be done, if necessary."

"I will pay all that it may cost, sir," was the quick retort, and before more could be said there came from aloft, for a lookout was kept there now, the cry:

"Sail ho!"

Captain Deering was just what Moses Gripstein had said he was, a bold yet careful commander, as well as an experienced one.

He had sent a man aloft the moment the schooner had reached a locality where pirates were frequently found, and he desired to get all the start he could in a chase, fast as was the Zophiel.

So he turned quickly to the lookout who hailed the deck and asked:

"Whereaway, my man, and what do you make of her?"

"She's behind the island astern, sir, and seems to have been dodging, but I think she's a brig," came the answer.

"A brig, eh?" and Captain Deering glanced knowingly toward his mate, who returned his look.

The fact that a brig was seen there was remarkable, as it was out of all lanes of travel for merchant craft, and she must therefore be either a cruiser or a rover.

As she seemed to be dodging behind an island, not from fear, but from a desire to slip up on the schooner, it looked suspicious.

In a short while the lookout again hailed the deck.

The vessel was a brig, was sailing the same course as the Zophiel, and was crowding on sail.

She was to the windward, too, and would soon appear in view beyond the island.

As it was then, the brig was yet two leagues distant from the Zophiel, and Captain Deering fondly wished that it was more.

"It is unfortunate, Captain Deering, to run across a vessel here, is it not?" said the Veiled Voyager, and she seemed to show some nervousness, the captain thought.

"I hope that it will not prove so, miss, and I am inclined to believe the brig is an American cruiser."

"The pirates mostly have schooners, I believe?"

"Yes, miss."

"I have heard that Buccaneer Kent has a brig."

"Yes, the daring scamp most cleverly turned the tables upon an American officer, Captain Hartwell, and took his vessel from him."

"How was it, sir?"

"Well, as I heard it, the brig Restless found the rendezvous of Kent, and captured it, after which her commander lay in wait there for Kent's coming in his schooner, when he took him by surprise and seized his vessel."

"It was at night, and Kent was supposed to have been killed, but escaped with some of his men, and was in hiding on the island when Captain Hartwell arrived."

"The brig's crew camped ashore, believing the island to be deserted, and Kent sailed out of his hiding-place at night, and captured the brig, sending Hartwell and his crew home in a small vessel."

"He now has the brig, which is the fleetest craft afloat, I learn, and has renamed her the Red Wings."

Captain Deering saw the veiled woman start, and then she asked, quickly:

"Do you believe that vessel is the Storm Bird?"

"Ah! that was the name of Hartwell's brig. So you know of the circumstance, Miss Deering?"

"Yes, I have heard of the brig's capture by pirates."

"And it was a set-back for Captain Hartwell which must have cut him to the quick, as there is no doubt but that he is a splendid officer—Ho aloft! Did you hail?"

"I said the brig was coming in sight, sir, around the island."

As the lookout spoke the brig came full into view, the course of the schooner having brought her into close proximity, so that she was not a league distant.

Instantly from the lips of the veiled woman came the cry:

"It is Hartwell's vessel—the Storm Bird!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE RED WINGS.

THE cry of Miss Deering fairly startled the captain of the schooner, her words revealing as they did that she recognized the brig as the cruiser captured from Captain Harold Hartwell by the buccaneers.

She seemed to realize that she had betrayed a knowledge she had not intended, and turned away but only to quickly return and add:

"I saw the Storm Bird before she sailed, sir, and I should judge that yonder craft was that vessel."

"It is the brig, Miss Deering, for I often saw her, too, when at anchor preparing for sea; but it is the Red Wings, now."

"The buccaneer?"

"Yes, I do not hesitate to tell you so, as I believe we can outfoot him."

"He is hardly more than out of range?"

"True, but we are yet two leagues ahead of him, as he has to round that point, or coral reef."

"You will fly, of course?"

"With all the speed I can get out of the schooner, for I wish to elude him in the dark."

"He is crowding on sail."

"Yes, and we will see if we can not dress the fair Zophiel up in extra clothes," and Captain Deering gave orders to set a jib topsail and shake a reef out of the mainsail.

This was done and the schooner fairly flew through the water, for a ten-knot breeze was blowing, while the wind was steadily increasing.

Having his own vessel well in hand, the captain had a chance to look at the enemy.

What he saw did not please him.

The brig was crowded with canvas and rushing along like a frightened deer.

But, it could be seen that, fleet as was the schooner, the brig was going a knot more an hour.

This would not have worried the captain, as within a couple of hours it would be dark, and did the schooner hold on fairly in the chase in the night, she would be far enough off to dodge her pursuer.

But the brig was not holding on toward the point of the reef, and this was what troubled Captain Deering.

Instead, she was holding straight toward the schooner, and the crew believed she was anxious to run near, give a couple of broadsides and then pounce down upon her prey.

But, instead of heading now to a place where she could deliver a fire, she held straight on, winding in and out among shoals and half-sunken rocks that lay before her in a manner that showed her commander knew the waters.

An anxious look came upon the face of the Yankee skipper, and with his glass he swept the waters ahead of the buccaneer brig.

A little sigh that escaped his lips as he turned to look at what his own vessel was doing, caused the woman to say quickly:

"What is it, sir?"

"I note a break in that reef, and the brig is heading for it."

"Well?"

"She is sailed by one who has run the same course before, and is sailed magnificently, too."

"She appears to be, and if she is going about it must be soon."

"I fear she is not going about, Miss Deering."

"What can she do there?"

"It appears to me that her commander knows what he is doing, and that he is aware of a passage through the reef."

"Ah! in that case we do not hold over a league the head of him."

"Hardly as much."

"Of course then we can only run for it?"

"Yes, Miss Deering, and the Zophiel has got to do her level best, for yonder brig is the swiftest flyer I ever saw."

The captain now turned away and devoted his whole attention to his vessel.

He did not care what course he steered so that he got the schooner upon her best point of sailing.

He eased off the sheet-ropes, and changed the course of his vessel until he got the wind well over his quarter, and the Zophiel fairly sprung over the waves.

Every sail was bellied out taut and not a capful of wind was lost.

The Boston skipper took the helm himself so as not to lose by false steering, and after a few

minutes he ordered the pump worked and the hose turned upon the sails to dampen them.

The woman, as well as the crew, realized now that the captain felt his danger, and they glanced toward the brig.

For a moment she seemed about to dash to destruction upon the foaming reef ahead of her; then her sharp bows cut the foam and it could be seen that she was passing through a break in the reef.

The next instant she was through, her sails flapping as she was tossed, wildly, for a few seconds; but, filling again, she came now directly in the wake of the schooner, and with no barrier but distance between them—that distance was less than a league.

"Now to see if our fleet Zophiel can hold her own," said the captain.

Not a word was uttered upon the schooner for several minutes.

All eyes were turned upon the brig, except those of the skipper who had the helm.

The suspense grew painful, and at last he looked behind him.

A glance was sufficient to show him that the brig was gaining, for he said:

"When I last looked I could not see what I now do, so she is gaining."

"What do you see?" asked the veiled woman, anxiously.

"A pair of red wings on each sail, Miss Deering. Before, I noted a dark spot, but now the shape of the wings is revealed."

"Take the helm, mate, while I give a look through my glass."

"She must gain rapidly for you to so soon make the discovery you did, sir."

"She does."

"And yet, Gripstein told me that this schooner was the fleetest of fleet vessels," said the Veiled Voyager in an angry tone.

"He told you the truth, Miss Deering; the Zophiel is the fastest vessel I ever knew with one exception."

"And that is the brig yonder?"

"It is," and the captain balanced himself while he looked through the glass at his pursuer.

After a moment he remarked:

"She sails three miles to our two and there is no escape for us, for she will overhauled us before dark, and there flies the flag now of Red Wings, the buccaneer," and the skipper gazed anxiously at the veiled woman by his side.

CHAPTER XII.

A GALLANT BUCCANEER.

THE Veiled Voyager turned away at the words of Captain Deering, with an impatient imprecation, and he said:

"So we are in for it, Miss Deering, and there is no need of my disguising the fact from you."

"The brig will overhauled us soon after dark, if not before, for she cares less for the rising sea than we do."

"Can the schooner not do better before the wind?"

"She is upon her best point of sailing now."

"Then perhaps the brig may not be so fast before the wind."

"I can but try her, Miss Deering," and the order was given to ease off sheets.

It was obeyed promptly and the schooner went driving along as though trying to escape from being swept by the huge wave that rolled along in her wake.

There was not ten seconds of time before the brig also was put before the wind, and immediately after a huge sail was set, such a sail now known as a spinaker, and it fairly dragged the brig along at a pace which caused her to gain more rapidly than before.

"She is coming on faster, sir," cried the woman in evident alarm.

"She is, and we can only go back to our former point of sailing, Miss Deering," and the order was given to do so.

But the brig held on still longer before the wind, and until the schooner was once more with the wind over her quarter, she had gained fully an eighth of a mile.

Then she swept around until she got the wind over her quarter, and came tearing along at a terrific pace that won the admiration of the schooner's crew in spite of their fears.

"If I was a superstitious man, Miss Deering, and this chase was by night, I would swear yonder craft was a specter, for never saw I a vessel before possessed of her speed."

"The men seem uneasy about it."

"They certainly do; but, take my glass and look at the flag she flies."

The woman did so, and said:

"It is the black field, and in its center is a large round ball with marks across it, while on either side are huge spread wings of scarlet!"

"Yes, the ball is the world and the winds are flying with it—it is Buccaneer Kent, Miss Deering, and I have heard that he was a Boston boy."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, I had a man once with me who knew him well when they were boys, and he vowed that he recognized the buccaneer as his old play-fellow, Kent Curtis, who went into the navy, but was dismissed for some deviltry and took to piracy."

"He certainly is a splendid sailor, and handles yonder brig in superb style."

"He is within range now, is he not, sir?"

"Yes, within fair range."

"Why does he not fire?"

"I do not know, I am sure."

As the captain spoke a puff of smoke came from the brig's bows and a shot flew over the schooner.

But the schooner's captain still held on.

Another shot was fired, passing over and ahead, but Captain Deering paid no heed to it.

Then came a third shot, striking the waves astern of the schooner, and with a ricochet going over the flying vessel.

But Captain Deering merely said:

"It is for you to say, miss, whether we shall hold on, or come to."

"Hold on, for he is carrying so much canvas he may cripple his spars, and night coming on, we may escape," was the plucky response.

"Then I shall hold on until I see all further flight is useless."

"Yes."

To the surprise of all the brig did not fire again, yet still rushed on in the wake of the Zophiel, and continued to gain in her own splendid style.

As she drew nearer they could see that her decks were covered with men, and upon her quarter-deck stood half a dozen officers.

The crew were at the guns, and others stood ready to man the sheets.

A grandly beautiful vessel she was, and under the pressure of all her canvas she stood up well, and showed that the waves troubled her but little, where the schooner was now staggering in the rough waters under the canvas she had set.

That the brig had ceased firing, those on board the Zophiel could not unders and, and knowing that the much-dreaded Kent the Buccaneer was in their wake, one and all were uneasy as to what their fate would be.

The brig had now run up within a mile of the schooner, and at her rate of gaining, as it was yet over an hour to sunset, it could be seen she would catch the Zophiel before nightfall, or at least come near enough to force her to come to by a broadside.

"Well, captain, I fear we are doomed, and yet the vessel is about all that the pirate will get," said the Veiled Voyager, calmly.

"Yes, and we will soon know what our fate will be."

"This suspense is terrible, Captain Deering, and you are sure there is no escape?"

"Not unless the brig should run under, or carry her masts away."

"It is useless to look for such good fortune now for us, Captain Deering."

"So I think, miss."

"Then end the suspense at once."

"You mean for me to come to?"

"I do."

"It will be best," and Captain Deering called his men to the sheet ropes and a few moments after, as topsails and jibs had been taken in, the schooner swept around and lay with her head to the wind.

The brig came rushing down in grand style, and as she neared the schooner, running dangerously near, Captain Deering thought there came a hail in a stern commanding voice:

"Ho, the schooner! what schooner is that?"

"The Zophiel of Boston," answered Captain Deering.

"Whither bound, and what cargo?"

"In ballast, and going to the Bahamas after a dead body!"

"I will board you!" and the brig swept by like a flash, rounded-to and lay to leeward of the schooner.

Instantly a boat was lowered, and, ten minutes after, a tall form, clad in a handsome uniform, sprang upon the deck of the schooner, not one of his men however following him.

He raised his hat with graceful courtesy as he came aft to where Captain Deering and the Veiled Voyager stood, while the buccaneer said:

"I see that I was right—that there is a lady aboard, and for that reason I ceased firing upon you, captain, for the guns of the Red Wings are never turned upon a woman."

CHAPTER XIII.

A PIRATE'S SYMPATHY.

"ARE you the Buccaneer Chief Kent?"

It was the veiled woman who asked the question, and she faced the outlaw captain, who bowed and replied:

"I am so known to the world, lady."

"You are a self-confessed pirate?"

"Yes, I can call myself by no other name."

"Do you sail the seas under a black flag for the love of killing, or for gold?"

"For gold, lady, for I care not to take human life if it can be avoided."

"Such is not the name you bear, Sir Pirate."

"No, I am painted very black, no doubt; but yet there is honor among thieves, it is said."

"If you seek to kill, our lives are at your mercy, sir; but if you seek booty you will not find it on board this schooner."

"I had supposed that I would."

"No, you are mistaken."

"It doubtless makes up in beauty what it

lacks in booty," was the smiling reply, and then with a glance at the veiled face, the buccaneer continued:

"Had I enjoyed taking life, lady, I would have fired at this vessel, not over her."

"I saw you and recognized that a lady was on board, so I ceased firing, determined to over-haul your vessel, though she is a very fleet craft."

"May I ask the nature of her cruise?"

"The captain, sir, informed you."

"May I inquire again?"

"The schooner is the Zophiel of Boston, Captain Deering commanding, under my charter, sir, to come to the Bahamas for the body of one most dear to me."

"Ah! you have my sympathy upon your sad errand, lady, and mayhap I may aid you, if you will tell me what island you seek, and when the one you loved lost his life?"

The veiled woman was silent for a moment, as if in thought.

Then she said:

"There was a boat's crew from the American sloop-of-war Emerald lost on an island of the Bahamas, now over two years ago, sir."

"Yes, I landed on the island once, and saw their graves, with their names cut in an oar-blade."

"And have you a chart of how to find the island, lady, for if not I know these waters well, and will gladly aid you?"

"I have full directions, thank you, from one who visited the island, and in the cabin of the schooner I have a coffin for the remains of the one whose grave I seek," and the voice of the woman grew low and tremulous.

"Pardon, lady, I feel for you, and will no longer disturb you with my presence."

"I am sure only such an errand could have brought you to these waters, and I will place no barrier in your way, being only anxious to serve you; but may I ask your name, as your face is veiled from me?"

"Miss Deering."

"Ah! the daughter of Captain Deering, then, for so you called him?"

"No, sir; it is but a coincidence that our names are the same, for we never met until I came on board this schooner!"

The pirate turned, and said:

"Captain, when you return to Boston you can vouch for it that Kent the Buccaneer is not as black as he is painted," and the buccaneer smiled.

"I can, indeed, and will, Captain Kent Curtis," was the blunt reply of the schooner's commander.

He had fired the shot at random, and saw the start of the chief, and his dark, handsome face pale, but in a second came the murmured reply:

"My name, sir, is Kent the Buccaneer."

Captain Deering had no desire to carry his investigation further, so merely bowed and replied:

"And I have to thank you, Captain Kent, for your kindness to this lady, and for releasing my schooner."

"I won't forget you, sir, and no one shall say ill of you without my defending you."

"And, sir, you shall also have my deepest gratitude, and never will I forget that you free this vessel that I may go upon the sad duty which I embarked upon."

"I do, indeed, thank you, sir," and the gloved hand of the Veiled Voyager was held suddenly out toward the pirate.

He stepped back as though surprised and his face changed color, while he said:

"I feel that I have but done my duty toward you, Miss Deering," and he grasped the hand extended to him, then raised his hat and turned away without another word.

Captain Deering escorted him to the gangway and also offered his hand, which the rover took with the remark:

"Good-by, sir, and you can go upon your way now."

"The island you seek lies due southwest from here, just thirty leagues away, but there is but one break in the reef surrounding it, and only a small boat can pass through that."

"You will find the graves on the southern point, and a spring of excellent water is not far away should you wish to refill your casks."

"My advice to you is to approach the island by daylight, enter the break in the reefs, which is on the south end, and get away before nightfall, for the waters are very dangerous to be caught in should a hurricane come upon you here."

Captain Deering again thanked the buccaneer chief, who sprang into his waiting boat which was at once headed for the brig.

As the boat reached the Red Wings the schooner fell off upon her course once more, heading as the pirate had directed, and under only lower sails now.

The brig also fell off on her course and as she did so the black flag with its red wing at the peak was dipped three times.

"He is saluting you, sir," said the veiled woman.

"Yes, Miss Deering, but I will never dip the Stars and Stripes in return to a salute from a black flag, was the determined response of the

captain, but he took off his hat and waved it, adding:

"That fellow has been maligned, or his humor to-day belied his usual acts.

"He is as handsome as an Apollo and courtly as a French count, while he did act nobly toward us, Miss Deering."

"He did indeed, sir: but did you notice how he started when you called him Captain Kent Curtis?"

"Yes, he changed color, miss, and it proved to me that he is the young man I have heard he was; but for the sake of his family I will not tell it in Boston when I get back again, and I hope you will not."

"No, he deserves that much at our hands; but hark! listen to that voice and those shots.

"There is trouble on board sure, and I guess the crew have mutinied because he let us off," was the somewhat anxious response of the schooner's captain.

CHAPTER XIV. THE RIGHT ISLAND.

THE schooner had gotten fully a mile away from the brig, when the loud shouts and shots were heard, coming down from windward.

Captain Deering seemed to at once understand that there was trouble on board the Red Wings, and the cause must be a mutiny on account of the release of the schooner by the pirate chief.

It was coming on dark now, and in a few minutes more would be, while the night threatened to be very black as the heavens were overcast with clouds.

If the trouble was on account of the schooner, Captain Deering deemed it best to remove the bone of contention out of reach with all speed, and he hoped that in the darkness that must soon come, and the distance, he could dodge the brig, should she again seek to overhaul him.

His voice rung like a bugle as he ordered all sail set, and at once sped away directly before the wind, determined to hold on for a while on that run and then change his course to bring the wind abeam, after which he would beat to windward.

By so doing, following a zig-zag course he hoped to lose himself from the eyes of those on board the brig, when he would lower all sail and lie under bare poles, as he had heard the pirates of the West Indies were often wont to do when hiding from a victim or a cruiser.

He trusted also that the fight on the brig would be a long one, and if he judged Kent aright, he was sure that it would.

"He did not care if the pirates played the game of 'Kilkenny cats,' so long as the schooner escaped, only he felt regret to have Captain Kent suffer from his kindness to the schooner.

There was evidently serious trouble on board the brig, for she came to, and the flashes of firearms could be seen, and the shots heard by those on the schooner; but darkness had now settled upon the sea, and the Zophiel was fairly flying away from the danger.

Suddenly she was brought around, with the wind fairly abeam, and she tore along furiously, well careened over, as the wind was blowing half a gale.

After a short run on this course the sharp bows were put up into the wind, and she was held upon the port tack in a beat to windward, to suddenly have all sail come down with a run, and lie under bare poles.

The position of the brig was now sought for, but she could not be found.

The captain and his crew had been too busy with their vessel to watch for the brig, but the Vailed Voyager had done so, and she pointed out the direction where she had seen the last pistol-flash.

"That's about where she would be if she was lying to, miss, but my glass shows a clean sea," said Captain Deering.

Suddenly he called out:

"I have her! she is running down on our course, so I guess the mutineers got the best of it; but we are not in that direction now, my hearties, and as a wake at sea leaves no track to follow, we will just keep out of sight.

"She has all sail up, and is barely visible with my glass, so we cannot possibly be seen."

Soon after the captain announced that the brig had wholly disappeared, and instantly sail was gotten up on the schooner which went away on a dead beat to windward.

"Captain Kent told me just how to head for the island, Miss Deering, but it would be well to keep away from there for a few days as the crew of the brig, if they were masters, will be sure to search for us there," said the schooner's skipper, when the Zophiel, was thrashing to windward in fine style, to place as much distance as possible between herself and the Red Wing.

"Captain Kent is mistaken in regard to the island, sir," was Miss Deering's response.

"Ah!" and the captain said no more in his surprise.

"Yes, the island he referred to is not the one I seek."

"The one where the cutter from the sloop-of-war Emerald was lost?"

"Yes, that is not the island, sir."

"You referred to the cutter yourself!"

"True, but to mislead him, for I knew of the wreck of the cutter and loss of all of her crew but one, the lieutenant in command."

"I understand now your motive, Miss Deering, but then there was another wreck in these waters in which the one whose body you seek was lost?"

"The one whose remains I seek is buried upon an island far from the one where the cutter's crew was lost."

"I will give you your course to steer to reach that island, as soon as you feel sure that you have dodged the brig, which will be by morning."

"Good-night, Captain Deering," and Miss Deering coolly retired to her cabin.

"I cannot understand that woman," muttered the honest skipper.

"There is some mystery about her too deep for me to fathom," and the captain turned to the care of his vessel.

It blew a gale during the night, but the Zophiel was a stanch craft and splendidly handled, so that the vailed passenger did not experience alarm sufficient to cause her to come on deck again.

The clouds were blown away by dawn, the sun rose clear and not a sail was in sight, though far in the distance were visible several islands of the Bahama chain.

Miss Deering, deeply veiled as usual, came on deck just after sunrise and handed Captain Deering a chart which she had drawn herself.

It was evidently copied from a larger chart, and well done, too.

It gave the longitude and latitude of an island of considerable size, surrounded by shoals, reefs, and smaller isles, and the directions of how to approach it.

The captain at once headed the schooner in the direction indicated, got an observation at noon, and taking his bearings, told the vailed woman that they would sight the island during the night.

The next morning when Miss Deering came on deck at sunrise, she beheld a large island a little over a league away, and taking a glance at a drawing she held in her hand, she said triumphantly:

"That is the island I seek, Captain Deering, for here is a sketch of its outline as you see."

CHAPTER XV.

A WOMAN'S BOLD WORK.

CAPTAIN DEERING took the drawing handed to him by the vailed woman and glanced at it earnestly, as he did so, keeping a look upon the island.

"This is a good drawing of the outline of the island from this point, Miss Deering, and I see some written instructions here," said the captain, and he read aloud:

"Head in between ragged point of rocks to starboard and shoal to port."

"Keep bowsprit pointed for red cliff on island, and entrance will open to view when within couple of cables' length of the shore."

"Round headland into pass and run into harbor without danger."

"Do not anchor off island in rough weather, for anchors will not hold on hard bottom."

"Harbor is safe anchorage in any weather."

Well, these instructions are clear enough, Miss Deering, and I will run in now if you wish, for the wind is exactly in our favor," said the skipper.

"Pray do so, sir, and meanwhile I will get breakfast."

When the vailed woman again came on deck the schooner had rounded the headland and was running through the narrow pass.

"The entrance is well hidden, Miss Deering, for I almost decided to put back, believing there was none here, when going aloft I caught sight of the water over the headland."

"Yes, it is a snug retreat for pirates, and I only hope none are here."

"I will land with four armed men first and reconnoiter, Miss Deering, leaving sail up and but a light anchor down, with all in readiness for flight if we have to run for it; but to me this island seems deserted."

The schooner now turned into the harbor, or basin, a snug anchorage indeed, with cliff-like banks overhanging a sheet of water calm as a mill-pond and something like a quarter of a mile square.

At the further end was a wharf which had been burned, and some stove in boats and wreckage was upon the beach near.

A pathway led up the hill into a vale, but the closest scrutiny revealed no one in sight.

A single anchor was let go, and sail kept up, while a boat was lowered.

Then the captain and four men entered the boat and pulled shoreward.

The woman saw them land and ascend the path, and nearly half an hour passed before they returned.

Then they came back and Captain Deering said:

"The island has been a buccaneer stronghold, miss, but the wharf, storehouses and cabins all have been burned, and desolation rests upon all, while there is not a trace of a human being having been lately upon it."

"I am glad to know this, sir, and will trouble you to send me ashore now—alone."

"Alone, Miss Deering?"

"Yes, for I wish to visit the grave alone."

"In fact, Captain Deering this is a sad labor of love with me, and all that is done I am determined to do."

"You surely do not intend opening the grave yourself, miss?"

"I do, sir, unless I find work impossible for me to surmount, when I will ask your aid."

"I therefore wish you to put me ashore, along with the coffin and implements, and if I need your services I will come to the shore and hail you."

Your are mistress of your own actions, Miss Deering, and I am here solely to obey your commands; but when you need aid, as you surely must, you have but to signal for it," said the captain.

The coffin was then brought from the cabin and placed in the boat, along with the spade, shovel and pick, and Miss Deering followed.

The boat rowed ashore and the coffin was placed upon the bank, while taking up the bundle of tools the woman walked on up the steep path, the men gazing after her with real awe.

Once she had gotten out of sight of the men she stopped and looked about.

Around her neck hung the boatswain's whistle which the captain had handed to her with the request to blow it if she needed aid, and as soon as she had disappeared he had himself gone ashore with all but two of his crew, the mate and cook, to be near should a summons come.

The woman gazed about her upon the ruins of the buccaneers' quarters, and after a short halt continued on up toward the center of the island.

Here she again halted and then took from her pocket a paper roll.

It was a map of the island, and a complete one, though the directions written in a feminine hand showed that a woman had copied it.

She studied the map awhile, read over the instructions and taking up the tools walked away along a path leading toward the lower end of the island.

She kept the map open in her hand, following the paths as directed until they came to a point of rocks, evidently a place of lookout for the buccaneers when upon the island.

Beyond, a hundred yards away, was a vale heavily grown with foliage.

Here were several scores of graves, evidently the dead buccaneers who had died from their wounds or disease while dwelling upon the island.

The map showed this little burying ground, only it contained a score or more of graves that were not upon the map, and most of the latter freshly made.

Going to a cliff the woman began to count the graves that extended in a row from there.

She stopped at the seventh and bending over examined it carefully.

Then she untied her tools, and took off her bonnet and heavy veil.

This revealed a beautiful face, haughty, resolute and daring, the face of a woman under thirty years of age.

Taking the pick she struck a hard blow with it into the grave.

She worked with a will and untiring energy, loosening the earth with the pick and spade and throwing it out with the shovel.

After a couple of hours her spade gave back a hollow sound.

It had struck wood:

Soon after a rude coffin came into view, and, after longer work, a space was made to enable her to place a rope she had brought with her around the head of the box.

With a strength one would not have believed she possessed, she drew the coffin upon end and made the rope fast to a tree to hold it there.

Then, spade in hand, she sprung down into the grave and still kept on digging.

Soon again her spade gave back a ringing sound, and, a moment after, the top of an iron-bound box was revealed, while from the lips of the woman broke a cry of triumph, followed by the words:

"This is the right grave, for I have found the treasure!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONFINED REMAINS.

THE woman seemed almost unnerved by her discovery, and it was some moments before she could regain her former calm manner.

But at last by an effort of will, she gained control over herself and dug down to what was now revealed as the lid of a seaman's chest.

It had been strengthened by iron hoops, and was some three feet long by eighteen inches wide.

It had been made secure by iron chains encircling it in two different ways and then locked with a padlock.

A few blows of a hatchet she had brought with her demolished the padlock, the chains were drawn away and after some difficulty the lid was raised.

What was revealed brought a shout of joy

from the woman's lips, and she sunk down into the open box with a weakness she could not resist.

For awhile she seemed as though about to faint; but she struggled hard against it and conquered.

Regaining her strength she began to fill a bag, which she took from under her dress, for she had come fully prepared for all that might occur, with the contents of the chest.

They were canvas bags of gold and silver, and others that contained jewelry, while smaller ones could only hold gems of value.

There were also a score or more bars of gold and silver bullion, and silver and gold plate in quantity with many other articles of value.

When she had filled the bag she got out of the grave with it and carried it to some distance until she found a hiding-place among the rocks for her treasure.

Then she returned for another load, and so on until the chest was empty.

She still searched carefully, as though she had dread of leaving some little valuable; but convinced that she had secured all, she let the lid down, tramped the earth hard down upon it, and then lowered the coffin to its place on top.

Her next work was to arrange the earth as though she had just uncovered the coffin, after which she resumed her vail and retraced her steps toward the shore.

The captain and his men were there picnicking on the shore, having just eaten their dinner, which had just been sent to them by the cook of the schooner.

They started at her appearance, dirt-begrimed as she was, but she said simply:

"Will you let two of your men bring the coffin, Captain Deering?"

"Certainly, miss."

"So you found the grave?"

"Yes, and I wish the coffin—only two of the men, please, and they can depart after leaving it there, for it is my duty to do all, captain, *I must do all.*"

He gave the order to two of the men who took up the coffin and followed her in silence.

She led them to the open ground and said:

"Place the coffin there, please."

"Shall we remove the other one, miss?"

"No, I will not remove it, for I have the tools to open it."

"You can go now, back to the point of rocks we passed, and wait there until you hear my whistle."

"Then call to your comrades to come and aid you."

"But, miss, can you get the body out alone?" urged one of the men.

"I can; do as I ask you, for I have vowed to do this duty, this work of love."

They glanced at each other and walked away together, leaving her alone at the open grave.

She awaited until they were out of sight, and then unscrewed the lid of the massive wooden coffin she had brought.

Then she went to the hiding place of her treasure and began to bear it back again.

She placed it carefully in the coffin, arranging all so that there would be no rattling sound when moved, and at last began to screw down the lid most carefully.

This done, as though she had studied her task thoroughly, and meant to leave nothing undone, she sprung down into the grave and with her hatchet hammered upon the lid of the casket to cause it to appear to have been opened, after which she threw a few shovelfuls of earth in upon it.

Then she blew her whistle long and shrill, and an answering shout came.

It was nearing sunset now, and as she saw Captain Deering and four men hastening to the scene, she resumed her bonnet and vail and stood leaning against a tree.

"I removed the remains from the grave to the coffin, sir, but my strength gave out, and I could not fill in the grave, so must ask to have it done."

"His resting-place for so long must be left as it was before, and ah, Captain Deering, to think that he was buried here among pirates."

The voice, so full of tears, touched the hearts of the captain and his men, and two of the latter with the spade and shovel rapidly filled in the grave and made all as it was before.

Then the four men raised the coffin upon the bier they had brought along, and following the captain slowly moved toward the harbor shore, the woman following with bowed head.

The shadows of night came on as they reached the shore, and the coffin was placed in the boat and carried on board.

The captain would have preferred remaining at anchor in the harbor for the night, but the vailed woman insisted upon going to sea, and under shortened sail the Zophiel moved slowly out to sea.

It was slow work gaining an offing, as she wound her way in and out of the shoals and reefs, and the woman did not leave the deck, seeming strangely nervous for the safety of the vessel.

At last she gave a sigh of relief when Captain Deering said:

"Now we are in open water, and I suppose I am to head for home, Miss Deering?"

"Yes, sir, and with all speed," and the woman went into the cabin to retire.

She had, against the urging of Captain Deering, had the coffin placed in the vacant state-room of the cabin, and he had yielded to her wish.

The Zophiel was at once headed for Boston, and captain and crew were indeed glad of it, for their lady passenger inspired them with a superstitious awe they could not shake off.

Not once had they seen her unveiled during the voyage, or ungloved.

Not even the cook had ever found her off her guard, and her manner was strange and at times almost stern.

That she had made a vow to get the remains of some loved one, from the grave on the Bahama Islands, and had the pluck and endurance to carry out her intention was what the crew believed, for not a suspicion had ever crossed the mind of one of them that there was other than the remains of a dead man involved in the action of the woman.

But with the mysterious vailed woman, and the coffin in the cabin of the schooner, from Captain Deering down, all were anxious to reach port and have the work over with.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SOUVENIR.

It was the night before the arrival of the Zophiel in the port of Boston, for Captain Deering had told his vailed passenger if the wind held fair, as it then was, they would sight Boston Light in the afternoon of the next day, and drop anchor off the city soon after dark.

The Zophiel had been crowded hard upon her home run.

Every sail sighted had been given a wide berth, and she had been kept as much as possible out of the track of vessels.

Several hard blows had caught her, but the stanch little schooner had weathered them well, and held on as straight for port as it was possible for her to go.

The vailed passenger had kept less upon deck than on the outward run.

She seemed to wish to be near the coffin that held the body of the one she loved.

Or rather so the captain thought.

He had asked her if she was sure of the right grave, where there had been so many.

In answer, she had shown him a plot of the burying-ground with the grave marked which she had opened.

"But there were more graves there than are marked upon this plot," said the captain.

"Very true, but they do not change the location of the original ones, and besides the remains had changed but little—see, this ring prevented all mistake."

"Ah! you took it from the hand of your—your loved one?"

The woman bowed, while she handed to the captain a handsome ring—a solitaire diamond—which she had removed from her hand, from which she had hastily drawn a glove.

The captain saw for the first time the color of his passenger's complexion, and more, upon the white beautiful hand for a moment exposed, he beheld several other rings of rare value.

She replaced the ring, and drew on her glove again, while Captain Deering felt assured that she had made no mistake in the grave.

He tried to draw her out about herself, and the dead man, but she was as silent as the grave upon the subject.

Then the woman retired to her cabin, locked the door and carefully screened the interior from any prying eyes.

Next she opened her two trunks and packed into one of them the contents of both, excepting a few things having considerable weight and seemingly no value, for she opened the stern port and dropped them overboard.

Then she went into the cabin where the coffin was, opened it and began to take the contents out and pack them carefully away in the larger trunk which she had emptied.

This took some time, but was at last completed to her satisfaction, when the lid of the coffin was screwed down again and the trunk locked securely and strapped.

A few things had been left out, and these she placed in a small leather sachel, after which she retired, for it was past midnight.

It was late when she awoke, and she remained in her cabin until she heard the cheery cry:

"Land ho!"

Going upon deck Captain Deering pointed out to her the distant land, and added:

"Yonder is Boston Light, and we will drop anchor, if the wind holds, soon after nightfall."

The woman gave a sigh of pleasure and replied:

"I shall be, oh, so glad, Captain Deering."

"And I have to thank you, sir, and your crew for marked kindness to me throughout."

"I have appeared a mystery to you, I know, but I am so circumstanced that I dare not be known, and so have preserved my *incognito*."

"Now, Captain Deering, we will part in a few hours forever, for I shall go at once ashore with my baggage, while Mr. Gripstein will come

aboard to-morrow and tell you what to do with the—the—remains."

"Certainly, miss, certainly, and your orders shall be obeyed, I assure you."

"I feel that, sir, and I wish to ask your acceptance of this watch and chain as a souvenir of one whom you will never know."

She handed to him, as she spoke, an elegant gold watch, with massive woven fob-chain and seal attached, a rarity in those days, when watches were worn only by the wealthiest of men.

The poor captain was almost overwhelmed by the gift and hardly knew what to say, but blurted out:

"My Lord, Miss Deering, that is too elegant a gift for a poor skipper like me."

"It must be worth far more than my pay for the whole voyage, and—"

"It is because it is valuable, Captain Deering, that I give it to you, for you have deserved it, more than that, even, and you must wear it."

"I'll do it, miss, and never forget you, though I don't know who it is I am to remember."

"I have a son, miss, of seventeen, and when I go he shall fall heir to this splendid gift, and we'll hand it down from generation to generation of us."

"I am glad that you are pleased, sir, and, more, I promised Mr. Gripstein I would personally pay you your wages for the run, so how much is it, may I ask?"

"As this was a special voyage, Miss Deering, full of danger, I agreed with him for the run at three hundred dollars."

"Here is the money, sir."

"But Mr. Gripstein said nothing to me, miss, about you paying my salary."

"Never mind, I do so, and if you will call the crew aft one by one, commencing with your mates, I will present to each of them a couple of months' pay."

"You are certainly most kind, Miss Deering."

"They have deserved it, sir, so pray call them aft."

The captain obeyed, and the surprised and delighted men each received from the gloved hand of the vailed woman a golden souvenir of her appreciation of their services.

Then she stood watching the rapidly rising shores until the schooner swept into the bay and up to an anchorage, letting go the iron just an hour after sunset.

A seaman was sent ashore to order a carriage, and soon after the vailed woman, accompanied by Captain Deering, was rowed to the landing, her two trunks being taken with her in the boat.

The carriage was there, the trunks were strapped upon it, the woman entered, and with a farewell grasp of Captain Deering's hand, was driven away, the sailor not hearing the low order she had given the coachman where to drive to.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MOSES GRIPSTEIN RECEIVES A PRESENT.

The carriage which bore the vailed woman from the shore drew rein at the ladies' door of a fashionable hotel, and there left her.

Leaving her luggage, she sauntered out herself and, securing a second carriage, had it carry her with her baggage to another hotel, and from there she went on foot to the house of Moses Gripstein.

That gentleman was, as usual, counting up his profits, when Emanuel let him know of the coming of the Vailed Lady in Black.

"Admit her pretty quick, mine son," he cried, eagerly, and as she entered he advanced to meet her, his face beaming.

"You vas back again, mees, and I vas so glad."

"T'e ships vas not captured by t'e pirat's, I vas hopes?"

"No, sir, the schooner is as safe as I am; but may I ask your nephew to go and get me a carriage, as I walked here?"

"Oh, certainly, mees," and Emanuel was dispatched upon the errand for the vailed woman.

"I vas so glad," again said Moses, while he rubbed his hands together as a manifestation of his pleasure.

"I thank you, Mr. Gripstein, for your good wishes in my behalf, and I desire now to liquidate my indebtedness to you."

"Sojsoon, mees; but you vas joost come."

"No, I have been back long enough to get the money to pay you, and I have it with me, and Captain Deering will report his arrival to you in the morning, and the success of my voyage."

"I vas so glad, mees; but I vill make up t'e amount at once."

And after some figuring, as a make-believe, for Moses had it all down already, he handed the slip of paper to the visitor.

She looked over it quickly, and said:

"Get my casket of jewels, please."

"You don't vas vish to sell them to me mees?"

"No, sir."

"I vill give you three t'ousands more than I lends you?"

"No, they are worth more than treble that, as I know."

"Count this money, please, and see that it is exact."

He did so, and then going to his safe, took out the casket she had left with him.

"I will give you a thousand more—"

"They are not for sale, sir," was the cold reply, and she opened the casket and looked carefully over them.

Then, as she was closing it, Moses Gripstein again added a thousand dollars to his offer, to which the veiled visitor deigned no reply.

At this time Emanuel arrived with a carriage, and the visitor took her casket, and telling the money-lender that she might need his services again, bade him good-night and left the house.

She said something to the driver in a low tone, and the carriage rolled away.

In obedience to his low-spoken order the driver drew up quickly after turning the next corner, the woman jumped out and Emanuel almost dashed into her arms as he came along at a run following the vehicle.

She grasped the frightened youth by the arm and as she held a knife before his startled gaze, she hissed forth:

"If you dare to follow me I will kill you!"

With a cry of terror Emanuel broke away from her and ran at full speed home, while the woman re-entered the vehicle and was driven to the first hotel she had stopped at upon her arrival.

There she dismissed the carriage, awaiting its departure and walking to a stable secured another vehicle and was driven to the other hotel where her bill was paid, her trunks secured and the carriage drove into the country, while the woman, throwing herself back on the rear seat muttered to herself:

"I think when I return by stage coach three days hence, I will have covered up my tracks too thoroughly for any one to have followed me."

In the mean time Moses Gripstein had been congratulating himself that this time Emanuel would know where the visitor was driven; but his hope was short-lived, as into the room dashed the youth, his face pale as he cried out:

"She nearly killed me, uncle, for she waited around the corner, drew a knife and said she would kill me if I followed her."

"Holy Israel! is the door locked, Emanuel?" asked Moses eagerly.

"It is, uncle, oh yes."

"I was so glad you didn't leave him open," and Moses looked it.

The next morning he went soon after breakfast to the wharf of the Zophiel.

She lay out in the harbor, and a boat with Captain Deering was just coming ashore.

The Jew welcomed him warmly and returned on board the schooner with him, for to his amazement he learned from the skipper that the veiled passenger had said he would look after the body.

Into the cabin the skipper and his owner went and Moses Gripstein heard the story of the voyage, and how the schooner had been overhauled and captured by the buccaneer, and then allowed to go free.

"He was a shentilmans, mine frint, so he was," said Moses with enthusiasm.

But he could not understand why the woman had told Captain Deering that he would know what to do with the body.

She had said nothing to him about its disposal, had gotten her jewels and cut off Emanuel in his intention of following her.

Then the two made a search of the cabin, to see if aught had been left by the woman as a clue to her strange departure, with no word about the body of the man who had cost so much money to secure, and placed her and others in such peril.

Not a thing could be found, for she had taken everything—except the coffin.

Then the two decided to have a look at that weird reminder of the presence of the veiled woman on board.

Moses Gripstein was terribly afraid of death and all its paraphernalia.

He did not wish to view the coffin, so allowed Captain Deering to open the state-room door and enter.

"Vel, v'ot vas it?" asked the Jew as no word came from the skipper.

"Come here, Mr. Gripstein."

Moses gave a groan, but obeyed.

The coffin was there, lashed firmly upon two chairs, and upon the lid was a piece of paper pinned firmly to the cloth covering.

"Vell?"

"Read it, sir, please."

"I wish you would read it," said Moses, not wishing to enter the state-room.

The skipper read aloud:

"I present this coffin, as it has performed the service I required of it, to Moses Gripstein, as a reminder that some day he must die, and as he cannot carry his riches with him, he should not rob with usurious interest the poor and needy who are forced to ask his aid."

"Oh, Moses!" groaned Mr. Gripstein, while Captain Deering smiled, and then with his knife removing the loosened screws he took off the lid.

"Mr. Gripstein."

"Ah, vell?"

"There never was a body in this coffin," said Captain Deering decidedly.

CHAPTER XIX.

GUESSING AT THE TRUTH.

MOSES GRIPSTEIN was terribly alarmed at the gift he had received, and kept saying over and over again:

"But I don't want him, captain."

At last the skipper quieted him and they sat down for another talk.

"But v're vas t'e bodies, captain?" asked Moses dolefully, though glad that he had not received a gift of a body with the coffin.

"There was no body ever in the coffin, sir."

"V'at vas you means?"

"Just what I say, Mr. Gripstein, that the coffin never had a body put in it."

"But you went to t'e islands?"

"Yes."

"And to the graves?"

"I did, and never suspected for a minute that the woman had gone there for other purpose than she said."

"Vell, v'at she went for?" cried Moses.

"I'll tell you my idea."

"I wish so, for I was have no ideas."

"I must tell you that I never once saw her face, and never did she make a single mistake to betray herself."

"She was nervous before the pirate caught us and cool as an icicle when he was upon the schooner."

"Now, as I understand it, she pledged with you very valuable jewelry for the loan you made her?"

"She did, and it was so good, so rich."

"You never saw her face?"

"Never!"

"She resented your nephew's following her?"

"She did, before she went away, and when she came back last night."

"She paid you in money last night?"

"Yes."

"It was English gold, I believe you said?"

"It was, and I make t'e discount for her, and make a little profits on it as vell."

"Where did she get that English gold?"

"I was never tell."

"She went to your home before nine o'clock, one hour after leaving this vessel, and if she had had the money with her before she left on the cruise, why did she get gold from you on her jewels?"

"Mine gracious, captain, you make me like I was crazy, for I don't know notings."

"Well, I am on the right track to discover all; I only wish you to follow me."

"Vare you goes?"

"Nowhere, only follow me in my reasoning about this case."

"If I don't get crazy."

"No fear of that, for you are too shrewd a man to lose your mind, Mr. Gripstein."

Moses smiled at the compliment, and Captain Deering continued:

"Now when Kent the Buccaneer was on board the Zophiel, she, the veiled woman, as much as admitted that the body she sought was one of a boat's crew from the sloop-of-war Emerald, and the chief directed me to the island."

"But that was not the island she sought."

"Vell?"

"She sought a pirate island, and she knew just how to run in to it."

"More, she went alone to the grave, which was in the buccaneers' burying grounds, she did the digging, and more, insisted upon taking the remains out of one coffin and placing them in the other."

"Oh my!" cried Mose.

"All this," continued the captain, "I deemed she did to keep a vow she made, but now I have changed my mind."

"Vell?"

"I saw but little signs of deep sorrow upon her part, and she really appeared gay after getting the coffin on board the schooner again, while, at the risk of going on a reef, I had to feel my way out of a safe harbor by night into the open waters."

"She seemed to expect the coming of some one."

"Vas dat so?"

"It was, sir."

"But did the men not have sense to know t'e coffin was not heavy, if t're vas no bodies in it?"

"The coffin was carried to the grave by two men, sir, and four men found hard work bringing it back to the schooner."

"Den dere vas a bodies in it?"

"Not a body."

"V'at vas it den?"

"I may be wrong, Mr. Gripstein, but I believe the woman went to the island after a pirate treasure."

"Oh, Isaacs!"

With the words Gripstein sprung up into the air, to drop back with a howl of pain, for he had struck his head against the low ceiling of the cabin.

His high hat was crushed flat, and while bemoaning its dilapidated appearance, he rubbed his aching head.

At last he said:

"A pirate treasure, mine fri'nt?"

"I think so, sir."

"You see it all points that way now, for the woman went veiled, and so remained through the voyage."

"She carried all tools necessary with her, and a coffin, and she had her charts, maps and directions."

"She would accept no aid in what certainly was loathsome work, had she loved any one ever so dearly, and gone after his body."

"She carried two trunks with her, and one of the men remarked that they went away heavier than they had come on board."

"The coffin came back from the grave very heavy, and now you see there is nothing in it, while the lining is not soiled, as it would have been had there been a body in it."

"She insisted upon having the coffin in the cabin, and now she goes away, taking her trunks, leaving the coffin, and though borrowing money on jewels from you, she pays you in English gold upon her return, covers up her tracks so she will not be followed, and more, she presented me with this watch and fob-chain."

"Oh, Israel!" and Gripstein grasped the watch and gazed at it with avaricious eyes, while he moaned:

"She gives me notings."

"But your interest and profits, sir."

"Dot vos pizziness, mine frint; but I give you one hundred tollars for t'e watch."

"No, sir, I wish to keep it."

"Vell, for your sake, captain, I makes it two hundred tollars."

"No, Mr. Gripstein, I would not take any sum for it, as I shall keep it as a souvenir of my strange voyage; but about the pay of the men, sir?"

"I have t'e monish to pay 'em all."

"You did not wish her to pay the crew, then?"

"No, she pays me for all," and Gripstein counted out the money for the captain, while he tried to cut the men down in their price.

But Captain Deering was firm, and as he knew what a tremendous profit the Jew had made he wisely kept quiet about the money paid by the veiled woman and receipted in full for the sum given him by Moses.

"But the coffin, sir?" asked the captain.

"Vell, I will sell it back to the undertaker mans; but if we was only know about t'e treasure, captains'."

"It would have done us no good, sir, for I would have respected it under all circumstances."

"But if it was pirat' gold, mine fri'nt?"

"It would not be ours, sir; but I am sure that the woman was in league with pirates, and went to that island for the treasure buried there."

"And she got it," said Gripstein, dolefully.

"She certainly did."

The Jew then went ashore, made his way to the undertaker's, told him the coffin could not be used, so sold it back to him at a good return for himself, as it was an article of furniture that could always find ready sale.

Then he hired a secret officer to track the woman, the result of which was that he found she had driven out of town in a carriage, overtaken the night stage and gone on in it to New York.

So he was forced to abandon the search for the mysterious voyager.

CHAPTER XX.

GRIPSTEIN'S VISITOR.

THE secret service man put upon the track of the Veiled Voyager, had reported truly to Moses Gripstein.

She had overtaken the night stage out of Boston for New York, gotten out of her carriage into the coach, taking her luggage with her, and been deposited at a hotel in the latter city.

Several days after the New York coach rolled up to the house of Captain Hartwell in Boston, and from it descended a lady and a little girl.

The handsome home had been closed for several months, as Mrs. Hartwell had gone away for her health, and her little daughter Celeste had been placed at a boarding school in New York.

The servants alone remained in charge of the mansion, and three days before the arrival of Mrs. Hartwell and Celeste they had received a letter telling them to have all in readiness for the coming of the mistress.

So the mansion was opened and ready for the mother and daughter when they came.

The mistress brought several trunks, and all of the servants congratulated her upon her improved appearance.

Her face wore the rich glow of perfect health, and she seemed no longer the invalid she had liked to believe herself before her departure.

After a week of rest she began to throw her house open to her friends, who were glad to once more enjoy the hospitalities of the mansion, well remembering how delightfully the Hartwells entertained in the past.

Lieutenant Harold Hartwell was absent with his ship in Chinese seas, but Mrs. Hartwell knew well how to play the hostess and she did so to perfection.

She improved her beautiful home still further in many ways, employed a couple more servants and purchased a handsome pair of horses and carriage, with a pony for Celeste.

It soon became rumored about that Mrs. Hartwell had again been a favorite of fortune and had another legacy left to her from some relative, and she was the envied of many.

That her husband had had a set-back in his naval career people seemed to be anxious to forget, in the face of accumulated riches.

Mrs. Hartwell looked more beautiful than ever, and her manners became more fascinating, while she seemed to become as joyous as a young girl.

Yet for all this she was haughty to her inferiors, selected her friends from the aristocrats only, and was ambitious to have her home known only as the resort of the nabobs of the town.

When a vessel-of-war of any nation came into port, Mrs. Hartwell was sure to give them a dining, or an entertainment, and the army and navy circles formed a clique at her elegant mansion.

Some six months after the return of the Zophiel from its mysterious cruise to the Bahamas, Moses Gripstein again had a veiled visitor.

This time the lady was not in mourning, but was elegantly dressed and yet wore a gray veil which completely hid her face.

She had asked to see the money-lender privately, and Emanuel ushered her into where Mr. Gripstein was, as usual, making up his profits.

The Jew placed a chair for his distinguished looking visitor and then stood bowing before her until she said:

"You are a money-lender, I believe?"

"I was, mees."

"Your name is Moses Gripstein?" and the lady consulted a slip of paper.

"It was, mees."

"Then you are the man I wish to see, for your address was given me by one who has had to ask financial favors of you."

"I was so glad, mees."

"Doubtless, and you will be glad to loan me money I suppose upon the same exorbitant terms."

"I will let you have monish, mees, if you vas have t'e collaterals?"

"How much will you loan me upon this necklace?"

She tossed a diamond necklace upon the table before him as she spoke, and as the brilliant gems met his eye he exclaimed involuntarily:

"Oh, how beautiful!"

"It is beautiful and worth a small fortune."

"I wish ten thousand dollars, sir."

Now Moses shook his head dubiously, and began to examine the gems.

This one was off color, that one had a flaw, a third was not a good match for the others, while a fourth was badly cut, and a fifth just a little short in weight.

So Moses went on until the woman said angrily.

"If you keep on you will make out the stones are all worthless; but I know their value, Mr. Gripstein, and if you do not care to advance the sum I need, I can go elsewhere."

Moses Gripstein saw that he had no ordinary person to deal with, and well he knew that if left on his hands the necklace would bring easily a couple of thousands more than advanced.

So he said:

"I will give you t'e monish you wants, mees."

"Pray do so at once then, as I am in something of a hurry."

The money-lender again critically examined the jewels, and turning to his book of loans asked:

"What name, mees?"

"Is it necessary to give my name?"

"Yes, mees."

"Miss Weldon, of New York."

"I thank you," and Moses wrote the name down, handed a receipt for the necklace, with a pledge to return it upon payment of the sum stated, and interest added at five per cent a month, the goods to be forfeited after one year, with ten days' grace, if not redeemed or interest paid.

The visitor read over the contract carefully, and then, as she saw that Moses was going to give her a check, she said quickly:

"I am a stranger here, sir, so give me the money, as I cannot use a check."

"I will give you t'e monish if you vish, mees, but it vas large amount for a ladys to carry mit her."

"I do so at my own risk, sir," was the answer, and soon after the visitor left with her money.

She walked about until sure she was not followed, and then made her way rapidly to a handsome house in the outskirts of the city.

It was the home of Harold Hartwell.

CHAPTER XXI.

LETTERS FROM HOME.

HAROLD HARTWELL had sailed from home under a cloud.

He was not openly censured, especially by

his brother officers, who could appreciate the situation in which he had been placed.

But he had lost his brig Saturn, in the Bahamas, and though no man could have saved her after she sprung a leak and was caught in a tornado, it was put down against him, he being in command.

He had afterward asked for a special command, and a new and beautiful brig, the Storm Bird, had been given him with picked officers and crew.

He had been given the brevet rank of captain with the understanding that the real rank would be his if successful.

So he had sailed under the best auspices, to come back in a lateen-rigged craft, given him by Kent the buccaneer, who had captured his beautiful vessel.

So it was that returning to his lieutenantcy, Harold Hartwell had gone to sea under prompt orders as a lieutenant of a sloop-of-war, where there were three ranking him.

The vessel too had been ordered on a cruise in foreign seas, and was not expected home for three years.

She had been gone something over half that time, when one day a mail arrived from home, for in those days letters traveled slowly to distant parts of the world.

There were three letters in the mail for Lieutenant Harold Hartwell, and he went to his quarters to read them.

The first one he read was from a brother officer, who wrote as follows:

"Had a lovely evening last week at your handsome mansion, your good wife sending me cards."

"The admiral was there, also General Woolsey, who commands at the Boston Barracks, while there were any number of distinguished citizens of the town, and all united in saying Mrs. Hartwell was the most charming of hostesses."

"We all admire the magnificent silver service, left you by your old aunt, and regretted we had not an old lady relative in decrepit health who saw the necessity of making us her heir."

"Your wife's jewels fairly dazzled our eyes, and all old heirlooms she told me, for I have seen her wear no less than five distinct sets in as many entertainments."

"What rich people your ancestors were, and to think you got all their wealth!"

"We all unite in deciding that you were four parts of a fool to be serving your country in foreign lands, when you could be living in your palatial house, enjoying yourself like a prince."

There was much more, but Harold Hartwell stopped reading and sat like one in a dream.

"What does it all mean?" he mused over and over again.

Then, like most people, he took up another letter, putting off reading the one from his wife until the last.

His face brightened as he broke the seal, for it was a letter, the first one, from Celeste, his little daughter.

It told him of her pony, her special governess and maid, and that her mother had purchased for her a harpsichord, which had been brought from England for her to learn to play on.

This letter was also a surprise, though a pleasure, and was laid aside after having been carefully read through.

Then the lieutenant broke the seal of the third letter, and his face paled as he did so, his hand slightly trembled.

He saw by its heading that his little cottage known as Hill Rest, had had its name changed to Overlook Lodge.

The letter was dated nearly half a year before and was as follows:

"DEAR HARTWELL:—"

"This is my third letter to you, my first having gone to Brest, France, and second to Alexandria, Egypt, as you directed, and which I hope you have received."

"In those letters I gave you little news, but now I am able to tell you considerable that can surprise and please you."

"You remember my ill-health after your departure, and that you left only with the promise to arrange certain legacies to us after your return."

"Now our exchequer was at a low ebb when you departed, as you may remember the former legacy was becoming beautifully less each month."

"True, I had our family jewels, did I care to sacrifice them; but I preferred to so arrange matters as to secure without delay, without awaiting your return, the inheritance which had become ours."

"With this determination my health improved, but I decided to go away for a season."

"Our little Celeste was accordingly placed at a fashionable boarding-school in New York, and I departed upon a sea voyage for the benefit of my health."

"I think I deserve credit for my courage, and I was anxious to visit the scenes you know so well."

"Suffice it to say that the voyage was in every way beneficial, and besides regaining my health, I so managed affairs as to get possession of the rich fortune which your endeavors had proven fruitless to gain."

"I hope you understand that as the legacy was ours, I simply got control of it."

"Returning, I took Celeste from her school and came home."

"I built another wing to the mansion, adding a tower, which commands a grand view, and purchasing the land upon either side. I had an ornamental gardener lay it out in beautiful style."

"I purchased a pair of excellent horses for a new carriage brought from England, and a riding-horse for myself."

"With the enlargement of our house I refurnished it, and no finer residence is there in the town, while

I had as many as four hundred guests at one entertainment last week."

"I found it necessary to increase my servants, so added a gardener, coachman, footman, butler—the latter a Frenchman, as is also my head cook."

"Of course I have other servants needed, and all goes on like clockwork, while people who are good judges say our home is princely in its appointments."

"Our silver service, inherited you know, is simply grand, and I am enjoying life in a way I feel I was born to do."

"We should be glad to see you after your cruise is over, and it might be well for you to resign, if you can get them to make you a captain first—I only wish you could be a commodore."

"I have not had need to draw my share of your pay, nor will I care to, while, as you must wish to be a little extravagant also, I send herein a draft on the Bank of England for five hundred pounds, and you can draw all of your pay in the future."

"We are both well, Celeste and I, and we often speak of you."

"Affectionately your wife,

"CELIA HARTWELL."

"P. S.—I think some of purchasing a yacht, which of course you must command upon your return."

"By Heaven! She has gotten the Cassiday treasure!" broke from the lips of Harold Hartwell when he had twice read the letter of his wife over and fully digested its contents.

CHAPTER XXII.

TERMS ACCEPTED.

I WILL now return to the fortunes or rather misfortunes of the Storm Bird, under her new name, flag and commander.

It will be remembered that Captain Kent sailed in the Storm Bird, which he had named the Red Wings, to seek a larger crew, as he had half the force he desired.

His senior officer, Senor Rapier, had suggested to him that he could land on the coast of Cuba, go to Havana and secure a fine lot of men, bringing them out with him on some lugger he would charter for the purpose, and meet the Red Wings at any rendezvous Captain Kent would name.

As he could think of no better plan, Captain Kent gave Senor Rapier the permission, landed him upon the Cuban Coast one night, his belt well filled with gold, and then sailed about in search of prizes until time to go to the rendezvous and meet the new crew.

Now Senor Rapier had not held one treacherous thought against his captain, when he left the brig.

He was a good officer, who had been led into a life of piracy by a hope to gain great riches, and had served his buccaneer commander well.

The man who had tempted him into piracy was an old comrade, the keeper of a wine-shop in Havana, and who was growing rich from his rascalities.

Senor Rapier had had this man in his mind when he said he could secure a crew, and it was to his pulperia that he went upon reaching the metropolis of the Ever Faithful Isle.

Senor Almonte was rejoiced to see him and gave him the best room in his house, ordering the most tempting of dinners for him and saying that when it was ready he would come and dine with him.

After the two had eaten heartily, drank deep, and were enjoying their cigars, Senor Almonte said:

"Well Rapier, I suppose you have made a fortune under the black flag?"

"On the contrary, Almonte, I have lost what I made, for the accursed Americans came to our retreat, captured it, lay in wait for the schooner, and all I had saved up went with her."

"They captured your schooner?"

"Yes."

"And you?"

"I was away at the time, getting a cargo of provisions in Nassau; but the captain escaped, with some of the men, and when an American brig-of-war ran into the harbor, a short while after, he boarded and seized her."

"Good! that was Kent?"

"Yes."

"He is a dashing chief, and I regard him most highly; but to your story."

"Captain Kent ran out with the brig, met me coming in, and sent the prisoners home in my little craft."

"But we had but half a crew for the brig, and so I am here to get men from you."

"I see; and the brig?"

"Is cruising until time to meet me at a rendezvous on the coast."

"She landed me in the island two nights ago."

"Is the brig a good vessel?"

"The best afloat."

"That says a great deal."

"Not a word too much, for she is the fleetest craft I ever trod the deck of."

"That is what she should be to float the black flag; but is she well armed?"

"Splendidly, and she is a new craft, sent especially to capture Captain Kent."

"Who captured her?"

"Kent."

"With the remnant of his crew?"

"Yes, but by strategy, for the commander of

the brig supposed the island deserted, and landed with his force."

"When Kent seized the brig?"

"Yes."

"And you have come for men?"

"I have."

"How many has Captain Kent?"

"Under fifty, all told."

"And what is the number needed to man the brig?"

"All of a hundred men, not including an officer."

"Well, you will need some seventy men?"

"Yes, Almonte."

"I can get them for you."

"So I felt."

"You are first officer?"

"Yes."

"How do you stand with the men whom Kent now has?"

"I am not disliked by them."

"Good! and how does Kent stand with his men?"

"They admire him, but fear him, while they have perfect confidence in his ability as a commander."

"Still they have confidence in you?"

"Oh, yes."

"And Kent is a trifle severe?"

"As severe as he can be, and should be, for commanding an outlaw crew is no easy task, Almonte."

"I can believe you, Rapier, but let me see, you have been seven years now a free rover?"

"Yes."

"And what gold you have saved up you have lost?"

"I have."

"You ought to be a captain, Rapier."

"I see no chance for it unless Captain Kent is killed."

"Ah, yes; but if you were captain you get the large share of the booty, you have your comfortable cabin and take no more chances than you do now."

"I understand that."

"And yet you must wait until Buccaneer Kent dies before you are captain?"

"Yes."

"Why not kill him?"

"What?"

"What claim have you on him, or he on you, to cause you to love him?"

"I do not get your exact meaning, Almonte?"

"I'll make it plainer, though you appear obtuse."

"Perhaps so, and therefore be particular in your explanation."

"I can get you seventy good men and true."

"Well?"

"Kent has about forty, say?"

"Yes."

"You will nearly double him, and you go as sole commander of these men."

"They know not Kent, only you, and when you board your vessel simply abide your chance, kill Kent and seize the vessel."

"Some of Kent's men will doubtless side with you, so it will be that much easier, and if the officers do not, kill them."

"When you are captain I will put you regularly upon richly-freighted vessels leaving Havana, and in a short while your fortune is made."

"Upon these terms I furnish you with a crew, Rapier, and upon no other."

"Do you accept?"

"By the Red Winged Flag, I do accept!" cried Rapier, utterly carried away by the temptation.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A DEEP-LAID PLOT.

ALMONTE was delighted at his success, in having gotten Senor Rapier to turn traitor to his chief.

"I was thinking of fitting out a vessel, Rapier, and placing you in command, and was wondering how to find you, when lo! here you are."

"There is no reason now to fit out a vessel for a cruise, as you have one for the taking, and I'll buy an interest in the brig when you have her under your command."

"I'll pay you a good price, and you can send me in your booty to dispose of—see?"

Rapier saw, or thought that he did, and the two talked long and earnestly over their plans.

The men were to be selected by Almonte, and they were to number seventy, while the lugger was to be gotten ready at once and it belonged to the wine-shop man.

Then he suggested that it would be well to help out of Havana a lot of people whom the Government was watching, pretending they were going to settle an island near, for there were nearly a hundred men, women and children, and a hard lot collectively and individually.

"They will be the very people to have at a retreat where you can go for repairs when needed, and it will hold your band closer together."

This Rapier deemed an excellent plan, knowing that Captain Kent had found it better to

have his crew feel that they had a home, which was a retreat for wounded men, a stronghold and a place to center their affections upon, so that they would not feel utterly outcasts in the world.

"Get your colony together, Almonte, and send them out upon a separate lugger, and when I get possession of the brig I will decide upon a retreat," said Rapier, and the cunning plotter set to work to carry out his plans.

One week after two luggers sailed out of Havana by night, and crowded upon them were nearly two hundred souls with their belongings.

The men knew just what they were going to do, and if the women did not know they had their suspicions, while the children did not care.

They were a motley set, Cubans, Portuguese and Spaniards, with here and there a Mexican, Indian, Englishman and American.

The men had mostly a record for outlawry, and were sailors, while as a crew for a pirate craft they could not have been surpassed.

Heading for the rendezvous, appointed with Captain Kent, they arrived there after a rough voyage.

It was an island of the Lesser Antilles, and one which Rapier knew well, having once been wrecked there.

The voyage was a long one, for the luggers were slow sailers and crowded, and the Red Wings was found there awaiting them.

Captain Kent was delighted at the prospect of having a colony and complimented his lieutenant upon his foresight and success.

Then he picked his men from the band, and the two luggers were ordered to sail for the old rendezvous, which in spite of its having been so nearly fatal to him he decided to again make his retreat.

"We will fortify it, Rapier, so that we cannot be taken, and no vessel will dare lie at anchor near the island as you know, so that we cannot be besieged."

"Then, too, we can keep a vessel in the secret basin on the other side of the island, to escape with if found to do so."

"But my idea is for the settlement to play honest, and thus drive off suspicion."

"The people can have some pursuit and claim to have fortified against pirates."

So said Captain Kent and Rapier took it all in, for he was forced to acknowledge that his chief was a good planner and executor.

The luggers were therefore ordered to sail for Kent's Island among the Bahamas, and besides the men furnished to the Red Wing there were enough left among the people for all purposes they would be needed for.

With the men taken from the colony of cut-throats, the Red Wings numbered a crew of a hundred men and set sail on a cruise for plunder.

Captain Kent at once began to drill his crew, to get them under thorough discipline, and the new men began to feel that they had a commander worthy of the name.

Rapier meanwhile had his men all posted as to his plans, and they were to win over from the old crew all that they could to join in the mutiny against Kent.

The young traitor officer had also guarded against there not doing so, and having to be summarily dealt with as well as for losses his own side might sustain in conflict, for at the island were enough more to make up a full force for the Red Wings.

So the treacherous officer plotted and planned, while he did his duties well and seemed most friendly with the chief.

He was glad to have the crew disciplined and drilled by Buccaneer Kent, well knowing how well it would be done, and he made up his mind to follow in the footsteps of the chief, when he should take command.

He dared not approach Miguel Santo or Benito, the other senior officers of the vessel, upon the subject of this mutiny, and his taking command of the Red Wings, though several of the younger ones, promised promotion by him, were won over by him.

Rapier had also agreed upon a great plan, suggested by Almonte, by which he could make a very snug sum.

The wine-shop man had reminded him that there was a large price set upon the head of Captain Kent, by the Spanish Government, especially if taken alive, and a fair sum upon each officer, with a lesser amount for the men.

Almonte had therefore suggested that Captain Kent be taken alive, and all officers and men not siding with Senor Rapier in his treachery, should also be made prisoners, put in irons and run into Havana where he, Almonte, would deliver the prisoners up to the authorities and draw the blood-money on their heads.

This scheme chimed in with the humor of Rapier, and he told his followers of the plan, and they were given orders what to do when the tocsin of mutiny should be sounded.

Captain Kent was too good a commander to go into action with a green crew, and so he sailed leisurely on his way after leaving the luggers, until one afternoon there came a cry from aloft:

"Sail ho!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

TAKEN AT DISADVANTAGE.

AFTER several weeks of drill and discipline, Captain Kent felt that he was able to venture forth upon his lawless cruising.

He had avoided the tracks of vessels as much as possible, and was creeping along among the Bahamas when the lookout startled all with his announcement of a sail in sight, and in a locality none was expected to be, unless it was a rover hunting a retreat, or a cruiser hunting a pirate.

The sail was descried miles away beyond an island, and made out to be a schooner of about the third in size of the brig.

The Red Wings was put under lower sails only and went along on a course that must bring her between two islands and thus enable her to head off the schooner, which it was evident had not yet sighted the brig.

But not long after the schooner's movements indicated that the brig was seen and at once the latter began to go in pursuit.

But why refer to the chase, for it was none other than the Zophiel under Captain Deering that the brig had sighted, and the capture of the schooner by Captain Kent is already known to the reader, as is also his kind treatment of the Vailed Woman in Black.

The boarding of the schooner by Captain Kent in person was the moment seized upon by Senor Rapier for his act of treachery.

What the schooner was he had no means of knowing, and it certainly seemed mysterious to see such a trim-built craft with so small a crew and a woman on board, in those waters.

Officer Santo had suggested that perhaps it was Captain Harold, the Gold-Hunter, again returned after the treasure he knew the hiding-place of on some island.

This suggestion chimed in well with Rapier's wishes, for if the Gold-Hunter had again ventured into the Bahama waters, in search of his treasure, then he should be forced to divulge the hiding-place of the money.

What else could have brought the little schooner there he could not understand.

When, therefore, Captain Kent had gone on board of the schooner, he gave his private signals agreed upon for his men to be on the *qui vive* for action, when he should sound the tocsin of war.

After a long delay on the schooner, Captain Kent returned.

Senor Rapier was so sure of success that he did not make sure of seizing the vessel during the chief's absence, but determined to await his return and then have things his own way.

Captain Kent returned to the brig, and as he reached the quarter-deck he said in a tone that all of his officers heard:

"There is no game, there, for us, Senor Rapier."

"Why not, chief?" asked Rapier in a voice which he meant should be heard.

Captain Kent turned with surprise at the tone of his first officer and answered:

"Because there is a woman on board, and no booty."

"The schooner is valuable, and there may be ransom-money from the woman."

"I have decided that the schooner goes free, Senor Rapier."

"And I say she shall not, for I am now chief of this brig! Kent the Buccaneer, you are my prisoner!" cried the mutineer mate as he drew his sword.

The words were uttered in a loud voice, and the drawing of his sword was Rapier's signal to his confederates.

He was fully armed, having gone into his state-room while Captain Kent was absent, and his secret signal to the crew had caused them to get their weapons as they could.

The brig had fallen off upon her course, after the return of the chief, and was dashing away from the schooner in the gathering gloom of night.

At the bold words of Rapier the other officers, Santo and Benito, had turned with amazement and dropped their hands upon their swords, and the quick glance of Kent showed him that they at least, were not mutineers—that they were true to him.

A second quick glance over the ship revealed the fact that the mutiny was not the work alone of Rapier, aided by a few men.

When Rapier drew his sword Captain Kent faced him and asked calmly:

"Senor Rapier, are you mad?"

"I am not."

"Then I am to consider you a mutineer against my authority?" and the voice and manner was still strangely calm.

"Not that, for the men desire a change of commanders and I am chief. You are my prisoner!" said Rapier, raising his sword and advancing.

Captain Kent did not retreat, did not even change his calm manner, as he replied:

"That is to be contested right here, Senor Rapier, man to man. Senors, hold the crew in check!"

With the words, addressed to Senors Santo and Benito, the sword of the buccaneer captain was drawn from its scabbard with a movement of wonderful quickness, and though Rapier

had made a spring to catch the chief off his guard, he had been met, blade by blade.

Rapier was surprised, for, in spite of the chief's skill with a sword, he had considered himself far his superior and that he could master him by his wonderful quickness.

But, he had seen Kent only in general action before, never confronted by one man and that man a fine swordsman.

Now he had found his blade caught on the guard of Kent's sword; and more his first effort to disarm him had been deftly foiled.

Rapier at once realized that he had made a mistake in being tardy, and a glance showed him that his emissaries had not won over all of Kent's crew, by any means.

To gain his end, to master the situation he must first master the chief.

With Kent a prisoner, or slain, he had the claim of seniority to command.

So he pressed his enemy fiercely, and the men at the wheel stepped back from their posts, causing the brig to run up into the wind.

The crew began to press aft, but appeared to be dividing in two cliques, one going to starboard, the other to port.

As some of the officers stepped to the side of the mutineers, Santo decided to act. With a word to Benito the two fired upon the mutineer officers, and at once shots were fired in return, until, with a wild cheer arose the cry from four-fifths of the men—those who had been bought by Rapier as well joining in:

"Bravo for Captain Kent!

"Long live our chief!"

Rapier's sword almost dropped from his hand as he heard, and by a quick glance felt the full responsibility of his mad mutiny.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MUTINY.

THE situation at first on board the Red Wings had been apparently all against Captain Kent.

Had he wavered in the face of seeming odds—had he shown the slightest fear of the result, many of the men who were won by his nerve might have sided with the officer bold enough to start the mutiny.

The sudden death of the two senior officers, who had stepped to the side of the mutineers, slain by the fire of Santo and Benito, had made the traitors waver from one end of the line to the other, and some of them in their madness returned the fire.

The result was a general discharge of firearms, and a surging mass of struggling men swept along the decks.

In the mean while the duel between the chief and the mutineer leader had not been long-lived, as once he had entered into fight, Kent fought with a firmness only equaled by his skill with a sword.

He drove Rapier back from the start, kept him an instant with his back against the bulwark, and then disarmed him.

Instantly Rapier had sought to draw his pistol, but the chief was too quickly upon him, and with an exhibition of marvelous strength, hurled him to the deck with a force that stunned him.

Then did Kent show himself worthy to command, branded outlaw that he was, for he sprang into the midst of the mutineers, sweeping a circle about him with his sword, and shouting in a voice heard above the tumult:

"Down upon your knees, mutineer dogs, and beg for mercy, or I will hurl you into the sea!"

The score of men who had been willing to cast their fortunes with Rapier obeyed with an alacrity that was almost ludicrous.

Thus the fight ended, the mutiny was over, and Captain Kent called out:

"Two of you men go to the wheel!"

Then he turned coolly to Santo and ordered him to put the mutineers in irons, adding:

"Then assume the duties of first officer, and you, Benito, take Senor Santo's place."

With this he walked aft to where Rapier was, having been secured by several of the men, when he arose half-dazed by his fall.

"Take that man to Officer Santo and have him put in irons," he ordered, and Rapier, crushed by his defeat, was led away in silence.

The two men who had gone to the wheel, and those who had sprung to their posts at the hal-yards, had gotten the brig once more upon her course, and she went dashing away before the wind.

"Do you wish to overhaul the schooner, sir, or did you mean for her to escape?" said Santo, coming aft and saluting politely.

"I meant for her to go her way unmolested, Senor Santo."

"And your course now, sir?"

"Put the brig under easy sail for the Island Retreat."

The order was given, and the brig's course was laid for the retreat, Captain Kent ordering her to go thither by rounding Andros Island, in the hope of falling in with some richly-freighted vessel out of, or bound to, Havana.

"Senor Santo, I am glad to know that I can depend upon you, and also upon you, Senor Benito, for this was a well-organized plan of

Rapier, only his men failed to respond as he supposed they would.

"Have you found out aught about the cause of the mutiny?"

"I have just been told by some of Rapier's men, senor, that the plot was arranged in Havana, and Almonte the wine-dealer is supposed to have been an ally also.

"The men whom Rapier brought were pledged to follow his lead, but after serving with you had more confidence in your leadership, so, while pretending to serve him, intended siding with you.

"The few men of our crew who joined them did so, they say, to make all the traitors reveal themselves, intending to be on the right side when the trouble came, and thus they were, except in several cases, and these men are in irons."

"How many all told, Santo, and in irons?"

"Twenty-two, senor, and I am sure they would gladly resume duty."

"Doubtless, but I am not one to forget and forgive readily, Officer Santo," said Captain Kent in a tone that showed there were breakers ahead for the mutineers.

More upon the subject Kent did not say, and the brig went on her way.

But no vessels were seen, except a coaster, which Captain Kent thought too insignificant in value to give chase to.

As the Red Wings neared the Island Retreat the two luggers were sighted, just moving in toward the little harbor.

Several hours after the brig dropped anchor in the haven where the two luggers had preceded her, and the commanders came at once on board to report.

They reported head-winds and a slow voyage, and had come in from the other side of the island, where, knowing their inability to beat around and enter the harbor that night, they had dropped anchor, hoping the wind would change and favor them.

While there they had sent a boat ashore, and it had rowed around to enter the harbor, when a schooner was discovered at anchor there, and they had hastily beaten a retreat for the luggers again.

"Was it a cruiser?" asked Captain Kent.

"It was a small vessel, senor, but the men in the boat were too much alarmed to note her particularly, for they supposed her to be a cruiser, or a pirate."

"Those on the schooner did not see the boats?"

"No, sir, or if so, they showed no sign of it."

"We lay at anchor all day, but ready to take flight if there was need of it, and toward dark I went in a boat myself to reconnoiter."

"I had not reached the entrance to the island harbor when I saw the schooner coming out under jib and reefed mainsail only."

"We were close in the shadow of the land, and were not sighted, so lay upon our oars until the schooner passed on out to sea and disappeared."

"Then we entered the harbor and finding all quiet there rowed back to the luggers and began to beat around for anchorage, fearing bad weather."

"It was just as we were running in this morning that we sighted your vessel, senor."

"You saw the schooner last night?"

"Yes, senor, but though she was heavily rigged, I could not tell if she was armed; but I noted the wide span between her masts, which raked very far aft, her very tall topmasts and long bowsprit."

"Senor Santo?"

"Yes, Captain Kent."

"The craft just described is the schooner I released."

"I must discover why she came here," said Captain Kent, decidedly.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OUTWITTED.

It seemed to trouble Kent, the Buccaneer, the more he thought that it was the schooner he had released which had been to his Island Retreat.

He had believed the story told him by the Vailed Woman in Black, and had the schooner gone to the island she referred to as the burying-place of the one she loved, she would not have come within a hundred miles of his retreat.

But the schooner had come there, had lain at anchor for a day or more in the island harbor, and, perilous as was the undertaking, had gone out to sea at night, as though anxious to get away.

Now, without a secret chart, or pilot, how had the schooner found her way into the island harbor, or known of its existence?

The coming there of the little vessel was certainly a most mysterious circumstance.

"I must know why," muttered Kent, and he at once ordered his boat and was rowed ashore.

He found the luggers' people landing, and gave Santo directions to have the cabins rebuilt in the glen, and there was ample wreckage there for the frame-work, while the luggers had brought some lumber.

The guard-house was first to be built and isolated from the others, and Captain Kent selected the site for his own quarters when ashore.

"I shall take a walk over to the basin where we kept the little sloop, Santo, and see if it can be made safe for a larger craft," said the chief, and he strolled away from the landing alone.

But he had already noted where a landing had been made from the schooner, and he followed the fresh tracks up the hill.

In some soft earth he saw a tiny track which could have been made only by a woman's foot, for the shoe was not such as were worn by a child with a foot of the same size.

The tracks led across the island, and there were more of them.

The keen eye of the buccaneer chief noted that where the larger tracks went over in a group, as it were, they returned apart, in regular step, and were more deeply indented in the ground, as though carrying a heavy weight.

This the chief took particular note of, and following the tracks soon came to the buccaneer graveyard.

A glance was sufficient to see that a grave had been lately dug, or opened and refilled.

He knew the spot well and recognized the grave as one in a row of graves, for buccaneers had used it as a burying-ground for many years.

There were tracks about the place, and often in the newly upturned earth he saw the footprint of the woman.

"She said it was upon the other island; that he was one of the cutter's crew who was buried there."

"Why did she deceive me?"

"This grave must be opened, for it appears yet to have a body in it."

Taking a pistol from his pocket he fired a shot, and in a short while men from the brig came down the valley at a run.

"There is no trouble, men, only I wish this grave opened to see why that schooner came here."

The men seized upon the shovel and other tools left there, and at once began work throwing out the earth.

The coffin was come to, and at the command of Captain Kent, was removed from the grave.

It had fresh cuts and blows from a hatchet upon the lid, but closer investigation showed that it had not been opened.

"Open it!"

A few blows did this and the moldering body of a man with jet-black hair and beard was revealed.

There was a cutlass buried with him and the remains of a uniform.

"A Spaniard," cried the chief shortly, and he had the coffin removed to one side, and was about to turn away still mystified, when one of the men who had remained in the grave called out:

"There's signs of another coffin having been under that one, chief."

"Dig away, then, my man, and see what it means."

The man did so, and after a little time the spade gave back a ringing sound.

"Ah!" said Kent, and he looked with renewed interest down into the open grave.

A few more shovelfuls of earth were thrown out and the iron-ribbed lid of a box was revealed, half-encircled by a chain.

"A treasure!" shouted the pirate who was digging, and the men crowded about the grave.

But the chief dispelled their hopes with the words:

"The treasure-box only, men, for the contents went in that schooner that was here."

The men gave a groan of disappointment, and the next moment the words of the chief were verified as the man in the grave opened the box and it was seen to be empty.

That a treasure had been there, and lately removed, all felt confident.

The box was taken from the grave and placed before the chief, who examined it critically.

At length he said:

"Men, this box held an enormous fortune, and I believe we can get it."

"That schooner holds the treasure and we must overhaul her, for the woman deceived me."

"Come!"

He led the way quickly back toward the harbor.

There he found Santo and the brig's crew hard at work, and said:

"Senor, leave the people to do their own work, and come on board with the men."

"The prisoners I shall send ashore, and if they escape, the man whom I have appointed Island Captain must answer for it."

"That schooner I allowed to go free has played me false, and I must overhaul her if the brig can do it."

"She has nearly twenty-four hours' start, chief."

"True, but will hardly expect pursuit, so will not drive as we will."

"We must get away within half an hour."

The crew of the brig returned on board, Rapier and the other prisoners were sent ashore, and the Red Wings, in the gathering gloom of night, went flying away in chase of the Zophiel.

CHAPTER XXVII.
THE MERCHANT BRIG.

THE course taken by the Red Wings led her by the island where the crew of the cutter from the sloop-of-war Emerald had been wrecked and buried.

The Red Wings dropped anchor with sail up, while a boat went ashore swiftly with Captain Kent in the stern.

He landed and walked rapidly to the spot where the men had been buried.

"Undisturbed, as I supposed.

"I was cleverly deceived by that woman.

"And who is she?"

"I must solve the secret and get the treasure, for that is a buccaneer treasure-box I am sure."

As he spoke he retraced his way rapidly to his boat, which pulled with great speed back to the brig.

"They did not come to this island, Santo, so we must catch the schooner.

"She hailed from Boston, and we'll run directly there and try and head her off before she runs in.

"Don't spare the brig a sail, Senor Santo."

"I'll drive her, senor," was Santo's answer, and the Red Wings went bounding away upon her long northward run.

The beautiful brig fairly flew over the waters, but ran into a series of head-winds which the schooner missed, or only got the edge of, and thus her great speed brought her in sight of Boston one night just before dawn.

When the day dawned the lookout hailed the deck with the startling intelligence:

"There goes the schooner, senor, just entering the Bay!"

Captain Kent dropped his glass upon the one of the many sail indicated, and uttered an oath in Spanish.

He recognized the schooner at a glance, and the same look told him also that she was beyond his reach.

Had he been a league nearer, trusting in the speed of his vessel he would have dashed on and captured her under the very guns of the castle.

"Two hours sooner, Santo, and we would have caught her to the seaward of Boston Light," he said.

"Yes, senor, but we had best not stand in near to be recognized."

"No, make a leg out to sea, and I'll capture some craft running in, and take her in myself."

"It's a great risk, chief."

"I must find out about that schooner, Santo, and who the woman was who so cleverly outwitted me and got that treasure."

"The treasure is doubtless on board the schooner, or I can trace where it is taken and go and get it."

Santo shook his head dubiously, and the chief continued:

"I will, after I capture an in-going craft, run to a hiding-place on the coast where the Red Wings can remain until my return."

"I will leave you in command, and if they capture and hang me, why it will be Santo the Buccaneer, that is all."

"Now pick me out the Americans and Englishmen of the crew, for I wish them to man the vessel I capture, unless it should be a Cuban, a Spaniard or a Frenchman, in which case I can also get a crew from among my men."

The Red Wings held on her course for the day, and, just at sunset, a brig was sighted running for Boston Bay.

The Red Wings changed her course, stood inshore, and headed the brig off a league from Boston Light, the merchant vessel not seeming to dread any danger so near port.

When passing near, as though just out of port, the buccaneer hailed:

"Ahoy, the brig!"

The response came in broken English:

"Ahoy, the cruiser!"

"What brig is that?"

"The Carrier Dove, from Barcelona."

Then the order came in Spanish:

"Lay to and I will board you!"

The merchant brig promptly obeyed, and soon after Captain Kent stepped upon her deck.

"I am commander of the American cruiser Storm Bird, Senor Captain, and desire to see your papers, as there is a pirate brig in these waters," said Kent politely and in perfect Spanish.

The Spaniard invited him to his cabin, showed his papers, told who he was consigned to in Barcelona, and that he had a cargo of Spanish wines.

"Senor, I am compelled to hold you prisoner," was the startling response of the buccaneer, and the words were enforced in a manner that showed resistance was wholly in vain.

The poor Spanish captain yielded with tears in his eyes, and half an hour after the two brigs were on their way toward a secluded haven on the coast, where Kent the Buccaneer knew that his own brig could remain securely hidden as long as he chose to keep her there.

The next night they ran into the inlet, the Red Wings leading the way with Kent at the helm, for he seemed to know the waters well.

"Now, Santo, I have the name of the captain,

his officers and crew, and I am going to run the vessel into Boston Harbor.

"By a stroke of good fortune the cargo is to be sold for cash, payable to the captain, so I will make a good speculation by the risk I run, while the Spanish skipper is also named in the papers as full owner of the vessel, which I, as owner, can sell, and she will bring a fair price, which is better still."

"Now I wish Benito to go as first mate, to keep an eye on any man who might wish to be treacherous, and I need another mate and ten men, the latter to be all Spaniards."

"Now get my crew ready and keep the prisoners closely confined until my return, which I hope may be within a week."

"Should aught befall me, this brig is yours, and success I wish you as Santo the Buccaneer."

"If you wish to prove traitor, you of course have the power to do so, but I trust you, Santo, as my actions prove."

"You can do so, senor, as you will discover," Santo answered firmly, and then added:

"I thank you for the confidence you have placed in me, senor."

Then he went off to arrange a crew for the Spanish merchant brig, from the buccaneers of the Red Wings, and by sunrise the daring outlaw chief, in command of his prize, was on his way to Boston, flying his false colors.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CARRIER DOVE IN PORT.

THE Spanish merchant brig Carrier Dove sailed serenely up the bay into the port of Boston, her swarthy crew at their posts and Captain Kent, alias Captain Felipe Mendez, gazing about him like one who was deeply interested in the scenery of the beautiful harbor.

It was just at sunset when the brig dropped anchor off the wharves and furled sail.

Soon after a boat left her side and in it was the pretended Captain Mendez, dressed as a skipper in the Spanish merchant service.

The darkly bronzed face and black eyes did not look unlike a Spaniard, and if called on to speak in the language of Spain the accent of Kent the Buccaneer was perfect.

"I will come off in a shore boat," said Kent to the coxswain, and the boat returned at once to the brig, while the bold buccaneer walked leisurely up into the town.

Every man on the brig realized the great daring of the buccaneer chief in running into port in the brig, but they were accustomed to his bold acts and knew that he would be successful if any one could.

The first motion of the chief was to discover all he could about the schooner Zophiel, which he had discovered as he dropped anchor, lying up the river from him.

He walked on until he came to a wharf opposite to the schooner and there saw a sailor smoking his pipe as he indolently leaned against a pile of freight.

"That's a pretty craft off there, mate, I was noticing her this afternoon," he said, speaking with an accent, as though a foreigner.

"You are right, sir, and as snug and fast as she's pretty."

"You know her then?"

"Well, I sail on her."

"Is she in the packet trade, for I see a sign up yonder that she is?"

"Well, she's been a packet, but lately was taken off her regular run to make a trip south, from which she only returned a couple of days ago."

"Is she for sale?"

"I don't think so; but she belongs to a Jew money-lender, and he might sell her for a big profit."

"I only asked as I expect to sell my craft, and buy another to carry back with me to Spain. I like the looks of the schooner and if you'll give me her owner's name and say where he lives, I'll drop in on him."

The sailor did so and Captain Kent walked away.

The address given him he went to without a single inquiry, seeming to know the town well.

Moses Gripstein was at home and received the visitor, as Emanuel hinted that he "looked like a gentleman."

"I hope, senor, that I have not disturbed you; but I am anxious to secure a loan from you," said Kent with marked politeness which quite won over Mr. Gripstein.

"Vell, mine frient, dis vas not pizziness hours, but if you vas have t'e collaterals, I vas have t'e monish."

"I wish a couple of thousand, senor, on these gems," and Kent laid upon the table before the Jew half a dozen fine diamonds.

"Dey vas fine if dey don't have flaws and be off color."

"You will find them all right, senor, and worth more than I wish for them."

"You wants to sell 'em or git a loan on 'em?"

"To sell them."

"I give you sixteen hundred tollars."

"I give two thousand, and you know that you can sell them for a liberal advance upon that sum to-morrow."

"You vas a judge of gems, maybe?"

"I am a dealer in them," was the cool reply.

"Oh! if you vas in t'e pizziness, mine frient, I give you t'e monish."

"Thank you; and now, senor, I wish to know if you will sell your Zophiel?"

"V'at! v'at! sell mine beautiful girl?"

"V'at vas you ask, my fri'nt?" cried Moses, almost wildly.

"I asked if you would sell your schooner, Zophiel."

"Oh! I vas understand now, for you see my daughter—I means my niece—vas named Zophiel, don't you see?"

"Yes, senor," and Kent joined the Jew in his laugh at the mistake made.

"Vell, mine fri'nt, I don't wants to sell t'e poat."

"I saw her to-day and thought I would like to have you set a price on her."

"Vell, I wants a big sum, for she suits me all the times."

"Has she ever been to sea?"

"Peen to sea, mine fri'nt?"

"Vell, she vas joost returned from a voyage to t'e Bahamas."

"Indeed, then she must be a good sea boat; but what could she have gone so far away for?"

"I chartered her to go there on special pizziness."

"Now I wonder if she was not the very craft chartered by a lady friend of mine who has just returned from the Bahamas, where she went on a special mission."

Moses started, and said eagerly:

"Mine fri'nt, who vas dot ladys, for I wants to know?"

"Can it be possible that you do not know the name of the lady who chartered your vessel, senor?"

"I don't know nothing about her."

"She pays me for my poat, and dat vas all."

Kent was silent a moment and his thoughts were busy.

He was sure that the Jew did not know, and he could understand why the woman had kept her identity from being known.

"But your skipper surely knew?" he ventured.

"No, he vas knows nothings like mineself, about t'e ladys."

"She simply chartered your schooner for the voyage?"

"Dat vas all, mine fri'nt: put you vas knows her?"

"Yes, and I fear you have gotten yourself into trouble, senor."

"Mine gracious! v'at vas I do?" cried Moses in alarm.

"If I was convinced that you do not know the woman, perhaps I can help you."

"Oh Isaacs! I do not vas knows her, mine fri'nt."

"Well, she was a pirate."

Moses uttered a groan that was startling, while he whispered:

"A pirates?"

"Yes."

"Vas she a man?"

"No."

"A womans?"

"Yes."

"A womans pirate?"

"Yes."

"Holy Moses!"

"I don't wonder at your alarm, for I fear she has gotten you into trouble, for she took your vessel to go to the Bahamas and get a pirate-treasure she had there, left for her by that terror of the seas Kent, the Buccaneer."

Moses groaned, while the chief continued:

"Now did you not know this?"

"So help me Abraham I did not, mine fri'nt!"

"Nor your captain?"

"He vas know not'ings, too."

"Then why did you charter your vessel to an unknown woman?"

"I tells you all about it, mine fri'nt."

And Moses told the whole story.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A PIRATE'S CONSCIENCE.

KENT the Buccaneer listened to the story of the Jew with the deepest interest.

He felt convinced that he did not know who the veiled woman was, and that she had deceived Moses as clearly as she had him.

From the captain's account, given by Moses Gripstein, Kent also felt assured that he also had been outwitted by the woman.

She had taken her trunks ashore with her and they contained the treasure, which had been brought aboard in the coffin, which Moses had sold back to the undertaker.

The buccaneer chief heard the story of how the woman had taken the coach to New York, carrying her luggage with her, so he was forced to give up all idea of solving the mystery as to who she was, or getting the riches she had so daringly gotten possession of.

But he had at least solved the secret of Zophiel's cruise, and would have to make what profit he could out of the sale of the cargo of the Carrier Dove, and then by disposing of the vessel.

These transactions would at least recompense him for his cruise South, and he began to feel

that he must get gold to keep his crew in good humor.

So leaving the Jew under the impression that he was a secret officer of the law, and would call again, he took his departure.

As before he seemed to know just where to direct his steps, and wended his way toward the part of the city where the fashionable residences were.

He came to a house surrounded by a stone wall, and situated in the midst of ornamental grounds.

It was an old mansion, large and attractive, and about all rested an air of luxury and refinement.

The moon shone as bright as twilight, and the chief stood gazing through the large stone gateway upon the scene.

The mansion was ablaze with lights, and the sound of music and merry voices came to his ears.

"And that was my home!"

"There I was born, and my father before me."

"Oh! that I could have seen then what I would become, what I am now, how gladly would I have listened to words of warning from those who loved me so well."

"But I was heedless, wild, reckless of consequences, and my God! what have the consequences not been to me."

"The Jew told me when I asked him, that I had run away to sea, and it was said turned pirate, while my father was dead, and my poor sister, he believed, was sewing for her living, unmarried, unloved and alone in the world."

"This must not be, while I make thousands, even though it be by crime I get my gold."

"I am glad I came here, for it has softened my heart and made me feel for my poor sister, who loved me so dearly, whose name I disgraced."

"I will go at once back to the Jew's home and make him act for me."

He gave another glance at the old stone mansion that had been his boyhood home and quickly retraced his way to the home of Moses Gripstein.

The Jew was startled at his unexpected return and became very pale.

"See here, Mr. Gripstein, I have come to have you do me a favor."

"Oh certainly, mine fri'nt, I give you monish, only don't tell about dat pirat' monish," cried Moses, who was sure that the visitor had returned to have him buy him off from telling what he knew.

"See here, Mr. Gripstein, you misunderstand me, for I have no desire to demand money from you."

"If I wished I could bleed you from the secret I hold; but my intention is to have you serve me and to pay you well for your services."

"I t'anks you, mine frient," said Moses, greatly relieved at the words of the visitor.

"Now do you know a nice little house for sale in a pleasant part of the town?"

"Yes, mine frient, I have t'e very place."

"I loan monish on it and ter beebles more away and leave me t'e house."

"It vas a peauty, mit an acre of lands, and t'e house vas furnish peautiful and all new."

"Dere vas a sea captains vot build it and furnish it, and he lose his vessel mit t'e pirat's. so he come back and get money on his home to pay a new ships."

"Don't you see?"

"Where is this home?"

The Jew informed the buccaneer of its precise locality and furthermore said that Emanuel would take a lantern and the key and show it to him.

The chief agreed and within an hour returned.

"So you vas like it?"

"I do very much."

"Name your price, but mind you, no exorbitant sum to me."

"I gif you t'e blace for three t'ousand tollars, mine fri'nt."

"I will take it now, and more, do you know Lawyer Duane?"

"I vas, mine fri'nt."

"Well, I wish you to go to him to-morrow and hand him the deed of this house, executed in the name of Eleanor Curtis, Spinster."

"Mine gracious! dat vas t'e sister of t'e vicked young mans ve vas talks of v'ot dey says vas a buccaneers."

"Yes, but that is not proven, and I happen to owe to the estate of the late Kent Curtis Senior, a large sum which the heir, Miss Curtis, never expects to get."

"I am able to pay some of it now, and wish you to state to Lawyer Duane that it is a conscience fund paid in to the heiress of the late Mr. Curtis."

"You are to say that it is a secret as to who gives it, and that Miss Curtis is to be given the place at once, while you are to place in the hands of Mr. Duane twelve hundred dollars, which are to be paid to the lady in the sums of one hundred each month."

"But vere vas t'e monish, mine fri'nt?"

"I will give it to you now, with the amount for the purchase of the house."

"Vell! vell!"

"You are to know nothing more than this"

conscience fund was paid to you by one you did not know, and more will come through the same source, while you were told to place the deed and money in the hands of Lawyer Duane."

"Yes, mine fri'nt."

"Now see what the value of these gems are?" and the chief placed a small buckskin pouch upon the table before the amazed Moses.

It contained diamonds, which the Jew valued at five thousand dollars.

"They are worth more, but let them go at that."

"Three thousand pays you for your house, twelve hundred goes into Lawyer Duane's hands for monthly payments, and the balance is for yourself, so see that you serve me faithfully, for I will know all you do."

"Good-night, Mr. Gripstein," and Kent the Buccaneer left the house of the Jew, who was delighted at his profits for that night's work, though anxious as to who his visitor really was.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SEALED PACKAGE.

THE senior partner of the wealthy shipping-house of Arthur Arleigh & Co., was seated in his private office looking over his mail, when a visitor was announced.

He was at once admitted and Mr. Arleigh saw before him a very striking looking personage, tall, elegantly formed, dressed in Spanish sailor garb, and with a face as dark as a Spaniard's.

He greeted him politely and was told that his visitor was Captain Felipe Mendez of the Spanish merchant brig Carrier Dove, consigned to the rich firm of Arthur Arleigh & Company.

Mr. Arleigh was delighted, for the vessel arrived in the nick of time to make a large speculation on her cargo, as orders had been coming in rapidly of late.

He told Captain Mendez as much, and seeing that he was certainly a gentleman and spoke English fairly well, he invited him to dine with him that day at his elegant home, an invitation which the sailor promptly accepted, with the remark that he would send a few cases of the choicest Spanish wines up to the merchant as a gift, and to sample at the dining.

Then they looked over together the invoices and Mr. Arleigh figured up the cost.

There were several lots of wine which were not invoiced, and of exceedingly fine and rare quality the captain spoke of, which were very costly, and he told the truth, for these the real Captain Mendez was smuggling through for his own profit, as the buccaneer chief had discovered.

So he drove a close bargain for these, and the work of unloading the Spanish brig was begun as soon as she was hauled in alongside of the wharf of Arleigh & Co.

That evening "Captain Felipe Mendez" went up to dine with the senior member of the firm, and his gift of wines had already arrived, so were liberally sampled.

Under their influence Captain Mendez grew confidential, said that he had been chased into port by a pirate brig, and that he barely escaped, as it was.

The brig belonged to him individually, and he had determined to sell her and purchase a handsome American-built craft, in which he could defy capture, and he asked Mr. Arleigh to purchase the Carrier Dove, which was a stanch vessel and good sailer, but not quite fleet enough to risk a valuable cargo in.

Mr. Arleigh saw the force of what the captain said, and having seen the brig that morning, and the firm desiring just such a craft for their New York trade, he concluded to make the purchase.

This he did, and "Captain Mendez" the next day received a fair price for his prize, as also the money for the cargo, which the papers made payable to him, for the freight was found to be just as stated.

The buccaneer also sold his "private stock" at a large price, and congratulated himself upon having made a very rich haul when he captured the Spanish brig.

The next day he was to turn the Carrier Dove over to her new owners, and he had already made known to Benito, who let the men into the secret, that he had driven a good bargain, and would charter a vessel to carry them back to the Red Wings.

The vessel to charter for that purpose Captain Kent already had in his mind's eye, and so he once more sought the home of Moses Gripstein.

It was hard to tell whether Moses was glad or sorry to see him, for he stood in awe of the mysterious man, though he hoped to make more money out of him.

"I have called, Mr. Gripstein, to see if I cannot charter your vessel?" he said.

"Mine fri'nt, I vas sorry, but t'e Zophiel goes into t'e packet pizziness again in two weeks, and to-morrows vas going upon t'e vay for repairs."

"Yes, but I will only need her service for three days, and she can be repaired upon her return."

"Vell, v'at you pays me for t'e charter for dree days, mine fri'nt?"

"I'll give you a liberal price, and I have some"

purchases which I will ask you to let your captain make for me."

"Certainly, mine fri'nt, I will be so glad."

"Here is the list, and the money, and I'll pay you now for your charter."

"I vas so glad," said Moses, and the list and money was handed over to him.

"V'en would you vish to go, mine fri'nt?"

"An hour after dark to-morrow night, we will go on board your schooner."

"Vera vell, mine fri'nt, she vill be ready."

"And please have my purchases on board also."

"Oh, yes, dey vas all right."

"Now about the house purchased, Mr. Gripstein?"

"Yes, I vas gif t'e deed and t'e monish to t'e lawyer, and he wonder very mooch."

"He ask me ten t'ousand question, but I have only say to him dat t'e shentilmans have a bad conscience from monish he owes Mr. Curtis for a long time."

"He gif me receipt—here it vas—and vill pay t'e monish to t'e lady as you vas say, and she vas so glad."

"You know this then?" eagerly asked the buccaneer.

"Yes, he vas send for her to come to his office and tell her all and she veeps mit joy dat almost makes me cry too."

"Then she accepted the deed and all?"

"Oh, yes, mine fri'nt, she move right into t'e house yesterdays, for she didn't have much to move, being only a poor womans; and she say now she can live like a princess, and she laugh quite sweet and I almost cry once more."

The buccaneer looked at Moses as though he doubted this latter statement, but he seemed touched himself by the joy shown by his sister.

"Well, Mr. Gripstein, if I do not see you again before the year is up, you will hear from me; but I wish to place in your hands here a package, and you are to keep it, sealed as it is, and, should you not see or hear from me within two years, then you are to take it to Lawyer Duane and open it in his presence."

"Within he will find instructions as to the contents."

"Do you comprehend?"

"I vas comprehend, my fri'nt."

"Now here is the package and be careful of it, as its contents are valuable—yes, will be worth some day ten thousand dollars."

"Mine gracious!" and Moses grasped the package, which was sealed securely.

Soon after the buccaneer chief took his departure, while he mused half aloud:

"The value of those gems when sold will keep my sister from want for the remainder of her life, should aught happen to me."

"Verily, this return to the scenes of my boyhood has softened my heart."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A CLEVER DISGUISE.

WHEN Buccaneer Kent left the house of Moses Gripstein, he wended his way to the wharf and went on board the brig.

Officer Benito was in charge, and he had a close eye upon the men, for he realized fully that should one prove traitor they were all lost.

"Does all go well, Benito?" asked the chief.

"Yes, senor, and yet I am a little suspicious of the man who is acting as second mate."

"Juan Verdi?"

"Yes, senor."

"Where is he?"

"He has gone ashore, senor."

"Ah! it was he I saw then come away from the door of the port commandant, and I heard the sentinel tell him the officer was not in, but to come later if he had important news for him."

"You saw him then?"

"Yes, and thought at the time it was Verdi, the Italian, who claimed to be a Spaniard when I made him acting mate."

"Yes, senor, I am sure he is a traitor; but what is to be done?"

"He has been ashore before?"

"Twice, senor, as I told you yesterday."

"Have you any idea where he goes?"

"To the wine-shop of an Italian sailor, senor, he told me."

"Then he is there now, Benito, and there I'll seek him."

"He may give you trouble, senor."

"On the contrary I'll give him trouble," and Captain Kent went on into his cabin.

He was absent for half an hour and Benito started as he saw a man in the uniform of an American Army officer appear.

"Don't be alarmed, Benito, for it is one of my disguises, which I put on to catch Verdi."

"Would you know me in this blonde wig, with my moustachios shaved off and this uniform?"

"Never, Senor Chief, never!"

"Then Verdi will not," and the chief sauntered forth to seek the wine-shop of the Italian.

It was easily found, and entering he saw his man there, drinking with others at a table.

He walked up to the host and asked if there was not a man there who was a sailor, by the name of Juan Verdi.

"Yes, Signor Officer, he is yonder."

"Can I see him alone, for I learn he has called upon the commandant."

"Yes, signor," and the Italian led the way into a small room which was intended for his higher-priced guests, and opened upon the street.

"Remain here, Signor Officer, and I will call Verdi," and the host disappeared.

Soon after the door opened and in peered the mate.

There was but a dim light in the room, and he beheld the supposed officer seated at a table.

"Come in, my man, for I wish to see you."

The man entered suspiciously.

"Sit down after you have asked the landlord to bring us a bottle of his best wine."

"Yes, signor," and Juan Verdi disappeared.

But he soon returned with the landlord who bore a salver upon which was a bottle and two glasses.

These he put upon the table, and was given some gold and told not to bring the change.

Toward the dim light on the wall the chief had his back and Juan Verdi sat in front of him.

"You called at the quarters of the post commander this evening, my man," said the chief, in a disguised voice.

The man started and said quickly:

"How does the signor know?"

"You told the sentinel that you had important news for the commander, and were told to come later."

"A soldier followed you here, and I was sent by the commander to learn your news, and if important, to pay you for it."

The man's face flushed as he said:

"My news is important, signor, and I ask for it, three prices."

"Well, what is your demand?"

"My pardon and freedom, and ten thousand dollars in gold."

"Umph! your news must be important, my man."

"It is indeed, signor."

"From your language I take it that you are a Spaniard?"

"I am both Italian and Spanish, signor, my mother coming from Spain, my father from Italy."

"You have not been much in America?"

"It is my first visit now, signor."

"Well, you must know here that every stranger is followed the moment he lands, and so when you come to headquarters professing to have important information to impart, you were followed here, and here I was sent to see you."

"Now, name your other terms, for you said you demanded three prices for your secret?"

"I have named the three, signor, my pardon, my freedom and ten thousand dollars."

"This implies that you have done aught to ask pardon for?"

"I will tell all to the commander, signor?"

"I am his *aide-de-camp*, and authorized by him to make terms with you, having the power to refuse, or grant your demands," and the chief felt that he was playing well upon the Italian's ignorance of America and its laws.

"Well, signor, do you grant my terms?"

"Yes, if your news is of sufficient value to demand such terms."

"It is, signor; but, if you think it is not—"

"Then our compact ends."

"You thus pledge me, signor?"

"Yes, in the name of the President of the United States of America, the Continental Congress and my sword," said the chief, tragically.

The Italian crossed himself, half-awed by such a pledge, and said:

"Well, Signor Officer, I can place in your hands, here in the port, the great rover, Kent, the Buccaneer, his lieutenant, and a dozen of his men, while if you have a cruiser, I can pilot her to where the Red Wings is in hiding!"

The chief seemed greatly startled at this great news, and sprung to his feet in mock delight.

"Where is he? where is he?" he gasped.

"Upon his vessel, or he will be to-night."

Some further conversation followed, when it was agreed that the treacherous mate should lead the way to the wharf where the Spanish brig lay, the officer following, and while he went to his bunk on board, the American should return to headquarters, get a body of men, and then go aboard and capture the chief and all on board, after which, in the absence of a cruiser in port, a large crew should go on the brig in hiding, and capture the unsuspecting crew of the Red Wings by sheer force of numbers.

The pirate mate left the wine-shop, followed by the supposed officer, and went on board the brig.

Soon after the disguised chief came on board, and was met by Benito, with the words:

"He is aboard, signor."

"I know it," was the grim response.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BITTER REFLECTIONS.

"You saw Verdi then, Senor Chief?" asked Benito, impressed by the manner of Kent.

"I did see him, Benito, and he is the blackest-hearted traitor I have seen in many a day."

"Has he gone to his quarters?"

"Yes, senor."

"Send him word, by one of the men, after I have gone into the cabin, that you wish to see him on deck."

"When he comes, send him to the cabin to get a bottle of wine for you to drink together."

"You understand?"

"Yes, chief."

"Then come quickly to the cabin yourself, telling him you will drink the wine there, and place the boatswain in charge of the deck."

"Yes, senor."

The chief walked rapidly on to the cabin and stepped to one side of the companionway.

He had but a few minutes to wait when the Italian was heard coming down with something of an unsteady step, for the chief had urged him to drink considerable wine.

As he entered, the chief dealt him a stunning blow which felled him to the floor, and in an instant his foot was upon him his sword-point pressed against his throat.

"Verdi, if you utter a cry I'll kill you!" came in a voice that was terribly in earnest.

The startled Italian was sober now, and his livid face showed that he knew now how he had been entrapped.

But he said hoarsely:

"I knew you, chief, all the time, and meant it as a joke."

"Playing traitor to me, Verdi, is no joking matter as you will find."

"Ho, Benito!"

"I am here, Senor Chief."

"Put that man in double irons, gag him and place him in one of the cabin state-rooms, locking it securely."

"Yes, senor," and Benito proceeded to obey the stern command.

The Italian attempted resistance, but the pricking of the chief's sword brought him to a sense of his danger, and he was soon helpless, ironed, hands and feet, and securely gagged.

Removing his disguise the chief went upon deck and said:

"My good Benito, I will relieve you now of the watch, you being on duty by day."

"If you have reason to suspect another of the men, call him into the cabin and serve him as I did Verdi, and I shall make an example of them that will be a warning to traitors under my command."

The night passed away without incident, and the following day, according to orders from the Jew, Captain Deering came to the brig to report that he would be ready with his schooner at nightfall, to take on board what passengers he was to carry.

Knowing that Captain Deering might recognize him, the buccaneer chief remained out of sight, leaving Benito to arrange with him.

He also gave Benito orders to carry the treacherous mate on board on a stretcher, pretending that he was very ill, and so binding his face up as to hide the gag in his mouth.

As the sun neared the western horizon the chief left the brig and wended his way into the upper part of the city.

He passed by the little house he had purchased for his sister, and his face paled and his heart beat faster as he saw her looking after the flowers in the garden.

He dared not catch her eye for fear she would recognize him, and with bent head cast furtive glances at her as he walked slowly by.

She was a handsome woman of thirty-two or three, with a look of sorrow haunting her fine eyes, and her form was slender and graceful.

She had suffered much from all that had befallen her, falling, as she had, from riches to poverty, losing her beloved father, and with the stain of piracy against her brother's name, refusing to become the wife of one she loved because she could not bring the shame of the brother she had idolized upon another.

She looked up as the chief passed, impelled, perhaps, by his earnest, though furtive gaze, perhaps from the presence so near of him who had her blood in his veins.

But the guilty man bent his eyes downward, lowered his head still more and walked more quickly on, leaving his sister to the joy of her new home, and the care of the flowers she had welcomed upon her coming like old friends, reminding her as they did of the lovely garden in the grand old home of her childhood.

The chief was deeply impressed by the sight of his sister, and after passing on for some distance, turned and glanced back at the little home.

He watched her going to and fro among her flowers, cutting a withered rose here, pulling off a dead leaf there, and seeming to enjoy her work with all the fervor of a child.

For a long time he stood there watching her, until at last she entered the house.

Then, with a deep sigh he went on his way.

Involuntarily his steps led him along a road bordering the bay.

He soon came near a grand-looking mansion with spacious grounds about it, and a stylish carriage with coachman in livery upon the box.

"Whose home is this?" he politely asked.

"Captain Harold Hartwell's mansion, sir,"

answered the man, who had been given the hint to call the lieutenant captain.

"Ah! it's a handsome home for a poor naval lieutenant," said Kent with a sneer as he walked on, and he added to himself:

"Hartwell must have married a rich wife, for when I knew him in the navy he was poor, having only his pay to live on."

"But he lives like a Spanish grandee now."

"Ah! now I think of it, he must have gotten that treasure he was hunting for in the Bahamas."

Continuing his walk he extended it for a long distance along the shore road until, just as the sun was setting he halted in front of a pretty cottage home from which the view was very fine.

He turned his gaze out over the scene and his face softened and saddened as he looked.

"How often have I come to this spot when a boy and gazed upon this scene."

"But it has changed since then, for houses dot the hillsides where I picked berries in those happy days."

"My God! if a man could only have the power to see how he could make or mar his future by a single act, how different would his life be!"

He had uttered the words aloud, unconscious of the presence of another near him.

That other was a woman, and she had walked down to the gate as though to meet him and overheard his words, when, wrapt in his sad meditations he had not heard her coming.

But a startled cry from her lips gave him warning of her presence, and turning he too gave utterance to an exclamation of commingled fear and amazement.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A LOST LOVE.

THE house before which Buccaneer Kent had halted was a pretty one.

Not grand in its mansion and spacious in its grounds like the Hartwell house, but neat, pretty, comfortable and homelike.

It had an air of refinement about it too, and one looking at the two houses would have expected to find as solid comfort in the cottage as in the mansion, and perhaps more.

Upon the piazza had been seated a woman, one of rare beauty of face and form, but whose dress indicated the widow.

Though perhaps past the age of thirty-five she yet appeared not so old, her form being youthful and her face full of loveliness.

She had been reading a book when her eyes fell upon the form of the buccaneer.

Alternately her eyes had glanced from her book to the sunset, with its piled up masses of grandeur in silver, gold and crimson formed by banks of storm-clouds over in the east.

It was her hour of restful calm, when the daylight was dying and night was infolding the scene in its black mantle.

The woman's face was one of intelligence as well as beauty, and she appeared to be one who had known much of sorrow, much of life's vicissitudes.

When her eyes fell upon the pedestrian who had halted before her gate she had noted that he was a sailor.

Her heart went out to men of the sea, for her husband had been a sailor, her son being then a gallant midshipman on a distant cruise.

She felt that perhaps the one who halted there, impressed by the scene of beauty, bore her a message from her son.

The walk did not extend beyond her home, so what else had brought the stranger to her very gate.

He had not seen her, so in her anxiety, in her hope that he came from her son's ship, she arose and glided down the path to the gateway.

The man stood there, his eyes upon the sunset, his face lit up by its glow, and upon that face a look of inexpressible anguish, of mental pain and heartache.

He was in sailor garb, yes, but the garb of a foreign sailor.

He was well dressed, a gentleman in appearance.

His face was very dark, yet very handsome, and his form elegant, his manner distinguished.

But he was speaking aloud, communing with his own thoughts, unconscious of the presence of any one near.

The woman heard his words and her heart gave a great bound.

It had been many long-years since she had last seen that face and form.

The presence of the man then called up strange memories, recollections that were startling.

It took her back nearly a score of years, when she lived in an elegant home and her father was a rich man.

She had met and loved Claude Cassiday, a young sailor in the merchant service then.

While away at sea reverses had come to her father, and he and her mother had urged her marriage with Kent Curtis, a young naval officer who was known to be a wild, reckless fellow, but the heir to a large fortune.

The father of Kent Curtis however had been almost swamped by his son's extravagances, and

still believing Helen Marcy's father rich, also urged the marriage of his son with her, hoping to retrieve his losses with her money.

Neither parent knew the real truth of the financial status of the other.

Into the port one afternoon came a packet, while a storm was rising.

Across the bay to the home of Merchant Curtis sped a small sail-boat with a young man and a young girl.

Upon the deck of the packet stood a handsome young sailor, his face joyous at his return home from a long cruise.

Suddenly a squall capsized the yacht just as she crossed the bows of the packet schooner.

In an instant the sailor was in the water, and saved the lives of both, one Kent Curtis, the other his sister, for neither could swim.

The packet picked them up and went on to its mooring, where the sailor hastened ashore to avoid thanks.

Soon after the two had gone he learned the story of who they were and that Kent Curtis was to marry Helen Marcy.

Helen Marcy was the maiden pledged to him, and Claude Cassiday started to her home to know the truth from her own lips if it were true that she had broken faith with him.

Upon his way a horseman passed, and it was Kent Curtis.

They recognized each other at a glance. The horseman drew rein, dismounted and thanked the young sailor for his and his sister's life.

Then he was asked if it was true that he was engaged to Helen Marcy.

The reply in the affirmative was followed by the assertion that he was going then to the Marcy Mansion.

Then Claude Cassiday had said:

"I too am engaged to Miss Marcy, and I will go with you and hear from her own lips that she has broken her faith with me."

"Upon her answer I will decide my cause." Together they went and Helen Marcy, brought face to face with the man she loved, refused to be sacrificed.

She refused to become the bride of one she did not love and Kent Curtis left the house forever.

Then came a double financial crash, for the three merchants had held off each with hope from the other, and now must yield to the financial pressure upon them.

Kent Curtis had ruined his old father, and with crimes charged against him which would send him to prison, fled from his home.

Helen Marcy's parents became poor, but she married the man she loved and Claude Cassiday gave them a good support.

Two children were born to them: Claude who had become from circumstances he could not control a boy buccaneer, and afterward a midshipman in the navy for gallant services rendered the Government, and Helen, then a beautiful child not yet in her teens.

Claude Cassiday had also won a lieutenantcy in the navy, for saving Harold Hartwell and his crew from death, and had lost his life in the far-away land of Mexico.

Kent Curtis, rumor had it, had become a free rover.

Now Kent Curtis stood at the gate of Helen Marcy Cassiday, and she had heard the bitter words of regret that had been wrung from his lips by cruel memories of the past.

Such were the recollections that had flashed like lightning through the brain of the young and beautiful widow of Claude Cassiday.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

UNFORGIVEN.

WHEN Kent the Buccaneer turned, at the startled cry of recognition uttered by Mrs. Cassiday, he heard from her lips his name spoken in thrilling tones:

"Kent Curtis!"

His face flushed, perhaps with shame, and then paled.

But he replied in a voice which he forced to be perfectly calm.

"Yes, I am Kent Curtis, Helen Cassiday, and it was a strange destiny that brought my steps to your house."

"Yes, a strange destiny indeed to lead you here, if you come not intentionally."

"I did not, upon my honor."

"I knew not that you lived here."

"I knew not that you were in Boston."

"I have been here for several days, and went to see my old home."

"I then went by your old home, to dream over the happy hours I had passed there, and then I came this way, following the path I had so often trod in boyhood and early manhood."

"I passed here to gaze at the scene, much changed since then, and my recollections of the past brought up bitterness which found vent in words which you overheard, I take it."

"Yes, you bewailed your past career, and I wonder not if it has been what men say it was."

"Then what have men to say of me, Mrs. Cassiday?" he asked bitterly.

The woman did not reply, and he asked the question again.

"They say that which if true, I wonder that you dare come here now."

"Will you not tell me how I am maligned?"

"Are you maligned?"

"Then you believe all that men say?"

"I know not what to believe."

"Helen, your husband is dead, I have heard?"

"Yes."

"He was slain in Mexico?"

"Yes."

"He had been given a lieutenantcy in the United States Navy for some gallant act?"

"Yes."

"I hope that he left you beyond want?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Well, were you in need I would gladly help you."

"And yet your poor sister is in sore need and you help not her, if you have the power to do so?"

"My sister I have not spoken with."

"Do you fear to see her?"

"Why should I?"

"If you are what men say you are I should think you would dread to face her."

"As I would you?"

"Yes."

"Answer my question if you are in need?"

"I am not, for my husband left some property, and I regained something from the wreck of my father's fortune."

"You have children?"

"Yes."

"How many?"

"Two."

"Are they here with you?"

"My daughter is, my boy is a sailor lad and away on a cruise."

"Helen, in recalling the past do you remember more against me than that I loved you?"

"You confessed to a love for me, and yet your actions did not prove it, for you fled from home under a cloud, and a man who loves a woman should never do wrong to bring shame upon her?"

"You refer to acts of folly which drove me away from home?"

"I would speak of them as crimes, so the world considers them."

"You are cruel."

"No, just."

"Do you not believe in repentance?"

"I do."

"Cannot even I repent, Helen?"

"Yes, but have you repented?"

"Of what?"

"Your crimes."

"Of what crimes do you accuse me?"

"Do you wish to hear from my lips of what you are accused?"

"Yes."

"Of piracy," she said firmly.

He started slightly, but said:

"Then you too have heard that old story?"

"Is it the truth?"

"Do you believe it?"

"It is said that there is proof."

"What proof?"

"Men who knew you here have seen you upon the decks of a pirate craft."

"And you believe this?"

"Do you deny it?"

He made no response for a full minute, and she asked again:

"Kent Curtis, do you deny that you are not what you are accused of being—a pirate?"

"If I were you would hate me?"

"I would abhor you."

"If I were not would you love me?"

"I never loved you, Kent Curtis."

"You were my promised wife though?"

"Yes, to save my parents from want in their old age I offered myself as a sacrifice."

"But you loved only Claude Cassiday?"

"Yes, mine is a nature to love but once, and Claude Cassiday was the love of my girlhood."

"Still, Helen, did I vow to you that I was not the black-hearted being some paint me, did I swear to love you and live for you alone, taking you to a happy home far from here, and devote my life to your happiness, would you not give me your regard, your friendship, an atom of your love at least?"

He spoke earnestly, his dark, handsome face lighted up as though his whole soul were in his eyes, and thus in suspense he awaited her response.

"Kent Curtis, you ask of me a love that is in the grave with Claude Cassiday."

"You ask me for a friendship which I could not give to one whose life was one of crime."

"You are a fugitive from justice here in your own home, and what your deeds have been since then you and your God alone know."

"No, Kent Curtis, our paths in life, divided in the long ago, I never expected to cross again, I never wished them to."

"I pity you with all my heart, for I fear that you are what men say you are."

"Not once have you denied it, and if so, there is a price upon your head; if so, you are outside the pale of true manhood, at war with the world, hunted by your fellow-men, and with the gallows casting its baleful shadow upon

your life, and dishonor to mark your grave, a curse to be upon your memory."

"Go your way, Kent Curtis, and never again cross my path."

She had spoken with an earnestness which had brought a deathlike pallor to her face, and her voice had quivered with pent-up emotion, which at last found vent in words.

His face also became the hue of a corpse, and he made an effort to reply twice before he could command his voice.

Then he hissed forth:

"I have never forgiven you, Helen Marcy, for casting me off and becoming the wife of Claude Cassiday, and you shall rue the day you made your choice."

"Had you become my wife, I would have been a different man, cast my evil career behind me, and lived a life of honor."

"You drove me from you, and all that I am you made me."

"And let me tell you, Helen Marcy Cassiday, I am all that men say I am—I am *Kent the Buccaneer*!"

He gave a bitter laugh as she staggered back from him, a look of horror upon her face, and then he strode rapidly away in the gathering twilight.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A GALLANT RESCUE.

KENT THE BUCCANEER left the presence of Mrs. Cassiday in a very bitter humor.

Had there been those present whom she could have started in pursuit, would she have done such a thing, they would have found him in a very dangerous mood, and one whom it would have been perilous to attack.

"I said nothing to her of her boy, but I have not done with him yet."

"I will yet lower her proud head to beg me for my mercy, and then sweet will be my revenge."

"Revenge against a woman I love, for I do love her most madly."

"Seeing her again has proven that to me."

"Bahl! what a fool I was to suppose I had any heart, when at the sight of that woman I know that I love her, even though I would be avenged upon her."

So he mused as he walked briskly along in the gloaming.

He soon heard ahead of him a man's voice shouting loudly, followed by a shriek in a woman's voice.

Then before him he saw a dark object coming rapidly toward him along the highway, and the clatter of hoofs as of horses in a run.

"It is a runaway, and a woman is in the carriage."

"I must help her if I can."

He spoke with the utmost coolness, deciding to act as it was his brave nature to do in spite of his evil career.

Nearer came the flying animals, and suddenly out into the road dashed the buccaneer.

He was a man of wonderful activity and great fleetness of foot, and, in an instant, he had seized one of the horses by the bit and was keeping pace with the animals.

A man of giant strength he began to tug hard on the bit while he spoke in a commanding tone to the horses.

The drag was too great, and they yielded to the pressure, while they were curbed by a master rein and hand.

Bringing them to a standstill, he saw that there was a lady and a child, a young girl, in the carriage, and said, politely:

"All danger is over, madam, and I will drive you back to your home, as you seem to have lost your coachman."

In the dim light of fading twilight he saw a beautiful face peer into his own, and then came words of earnest, grateful praise of his brave act and expression of deepest gratitude, while in a childish voice followed:

"You are so brave, sir, to risk your life to save ours."

"You must be a great and good man, and I will always pray for you."

A bitter reply rose to the lips of the buccaneer:

"Even your prayers, my beautiful child, can do me no good, for—"

He checked himself, for he saw her large eyes open with wonder, and her mother, who had been startled by what he said, spoke:

"Surely you will tell us the name of our gallant rescuer from death, and return home as my guest, for I live near here."

"My name is Felipe Mendez, madam, and I am captain of the Spanish merchant brig *Carrier Dove*, now in port, and, while thanking you for your hospitality, must return at once on board ship."

"But, sir, I must insist that you at least return and dine with Celeste and me."

"I am Mrs. Captain Harold Hartwell, wife of Captain Hartwell of the Navy."

The buccaneer bowed, and again thanking the lady, mounted the box and drove the horses back down the highway to where the coachman was found, badly bruised by his fall from the box, but not seriously hurt.

The horses had shied suddenly at an object on

the roadside, and had started on a run, when the carriage, swerving, had thrown him to the ground, he said.

Back to Overlook Mansion drove the buccaneer, and then he intended to part with those whom he had so well served.

Mrs. Hartwell, however, urged, and little Celeste pleaded that he should at least enter the mansion and have a glass of wine.

Acting from a sudden impulse, the buccaneer chief consented, and if Mrs. Hartwell expected to astound him with the elegance of her home she was mistaken, and more, his cursory glance around him piqued her.

He drank his wine with the air of one who had been accustomed to refined society, and yet when little Celeste, at his going, held up her face for a kiss, his face paled with the rush of cruel memories upon him.

"You must kiss me good-by, Captain Mendez," she said, in her sweet way.

He did so, and then accepted the extended hand of her mother, who again was profuse in her expressions of gratitude.

The haughty woman had quite unbent before that strange, courtly man to whom she and her child owed their lives, for, had the runaway horses gone much further, they would have dashed down a rocky steep to sure death.

She had intended, in urging the stranger to at least accept the tender of a glass of wine, to in some way reward him; but she had not dared do so.

Something about him seemed to haunt her, and she strove over and over to recall his face.

"I have met you before, Captain Mendez, I feel certain; but where and when you must aid me in recalling," she had said, as she sat fronting him, a glass of wine in her hand.

"I do not remember having ever before seen you, Mrs. Hartwell, and surely had I done so I could not have forgotten it," he said, gallantly, and speaking with a foreign accent, which he had only dropped since his coming into port, in his conversation with Helen Cassiday.

"Still I feel that we have met before," she urged, and in vain did she strive to recall his face.

"You will see us again when next you visit our port, Captain Mendez?" she said.

"Yes, thank you."

"Don't forget us now, or I'll not forgive you," called out Celeste, as the buccaneer strode rapidly away.

"A courtly gentleman, a brave man, and one with a history, for he is not what he would appear."

"Oh, when and where have I met him before?" and Celia Hartwell in vain strove to recall the face of the buccaneer.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

GOING TO SEA.

It was an hour after dark when Captain Kent arrived at the wharf where the Carrier Dove lay.

The little schooner Zophiel was riding by a single anchor out in the stream, and the things had been sent on board of her which Captain Deering had purchased from the list the buccaneer had given Moses Gripstein, and also what luggage there was to go from the brig had been sent out to her.

The agent of Arthur Arleigh & Co. was there to receive the brig from "Captain Mendez," and Benito and the crew of pirates anxiously await the coming of their chief, and the former was becoming a trifle nervous.

"I am glad you have come, chief," said Benito, in a whisper.

"Is all in readiness to leave the brig?"

"Yes, captain."

"And Verdi?"

"Is in the cabin, senor."

"Have the men bring him out and place him in the boat; but is he secure?"

"He is securely gagged, senor, and is bound hard to the cot, while he is ironed hands and feet."

"And his face?"

"Is bound up so as to hide the gag and give the idea that he has been injured."

"Very well, fetch him on deck and lower the cot into the boat," was the cool reply.

Then Captain Mendez, as he was supposed to be, surrendered the Carrier Dove to the keeping of Arleigh & Company's representative, shook hands with him and went over into the waiting boat, whither Benito, the bound Verdi and the crew had preceded him.

"Give way, men," he ordered, and the crew of the schooner obeyed and soon ran alongside of the Zophiel.

"I have a man here, captain, who is badly hurt, so would like to get him below as soon as possible," said the buccaneer, taking good care that Captain Deering should not see his face distinctly, and thus be set to wondering where he had seen him before.

As Captain Deering had his own quarters, and always gave up the cabin to his passengers, he now did so and Verdi was taken below, Captain Kent muffling himself up as though chilly and remaining upon deck.

"I await your orders, sir," said Captain Deering.

ing as the boat was hoisted to the davits, approaching the buccaneer.

"Put to sea, captain, and my mate will give you the course, as I am going to turn in, not feeling just right," and the buccaneer was glad to escape the searching gaze of the honest old skipper.

The Zophiel fairly flew down the bay with a stiff southerly breeze, and rounding Boston Light headed along the coast at a ten-knot pace.

About midnight Benito came down into the cabin and found the chief reclining upon a lounge, not having retired.

Over in one corner of the cabin was the cot with Verdi upon it, and he was awake and uneasy.

The gag had been removed from his mouth, but the chief in being thus humane had warned him if he gave outcry he would instantly kill him.

The Italian was almost in despair, for he knew that unless he could escape or be rescued, his fate was sure.

He had intended, when being taken on board the schooner, to raise his hands, tear the gag from his mouth and denounce all as pirates; but he had been thwarted in this by being bound securely to the cot, and unable to move or to utter more than a moan.

He was aware that the crew of the schooner numbered only the captain, mate, six men and the cook, and they were all unarmed excepting the skipper, whose weapons were doubtless in the cabin.

Against these were the buccaneer chief, Benito and eleven men, so that a rescue was impossible, for all were thoroughly armed he well knew.

Thus he was compelled to silence and held little hope of escape or rescue.

When relieved of the gag, he had been warned against an outcry in a manner that told him the chief was in earnest, so there he had lain in his irons until the coming in of Benito.

"Well, Benito, with this breeze we should run into the inlet in a couple of hours more," said the chief.

"Yes, sir, we're making very little less than twelve knots and can reach the Red Wings within little over an hour, so I came for orders, sir."

"What did you say to the skipper?"

"I told him that we had sold our vessel, as he knew, and were going to join the Spanish craft loading with lumber and return in her to Spain."

"That was right, but we must run up the inlet above the Red Wings, so as not to have that keen-eyed skipper see her, and then drop anchor, while I'll go in the boat with a couple of men under pretense of looking for the brig."

"Yes, senor."

"You and the men help them lower sail, and be careful to drop both anchors as though our men did not understand, and in furling the sails tie the knots hard, so that the schooner cannot be gotten quickly away."

"We could master the crew of course, if need be, but I do not wish a hand raised against the skipper or his men."

"I understand, senor."

"When I have boarded the Red Wings I will get under way and with only mainsail and jib run down to the schooner, reaching her I hope before dawn."

"I think it can be done, sir; but if not you could overhaul her if she should fly."

"I do not wish to be seen on the coast until ready for action, nor do I wish to have to open fire upon the schooner."

"I'll carry out your orders, senor."

"When near the place where you are to anchor, come and call me, and then, when I leave, say that you'll turn in for a short rest, so as to be in here to guard this traitor."

"I shall gag him again before leaving, so that he cannot open cry, but he must not be left alone, should the captain come into the cabin."

"I understand, senor, and shall see that he gets no chance to betray us."

"Yes, for it would only bring on a conflict with the good skipper and his crew, which I wish to avoid above all things, as the vessel belongs to one whom I can make very useful."

The conversation had been carried on in Spanish, so if overheard it would not have been understood, as neither the skipper or his crew spoke other than English.

Then Benito went on deck and explained more fully to Captain Deering about the desire of his commander to anchor in the inlet while he went in search of the pretended Spanish lumber vessel.

As the skipper did not know the waters of the inlet, he was perfectly willing not to go feeling about in the dark, while as he was anxious to get back and lay his craft up for repairs he was willing to have the supposed Spanish captain go at once in search of the vessel so that he could get back and be ready to run to her with the Zophiel by dawn.

Half an hour after Benito again came into the cabin and said that the schooner was in the inlet looking for an anchorage, and Captain Kent said:

"Have the boat ready, for I will come back

as soon as the anchors are let go, and I wish two of my own crew to go as oarsmen.

"Now I'll make sure that this traitor gives us no trouble," and he turned to the prisoner, while Benito went on deck.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN AMAZED SKIPPER.

FEELING her way into the inlet the Zophiel dropped anchor in a cove where there was plenty of water, the passengers springing nimbly to work to aid the crew of the schooner.

Down went a second anchor suddenly, and Benito explained that his men, not understanding English well, had misunderstood Captain Deering's order.

Then, nimble as monkeys they had the sails all furled by the time a boat had been lowered, while one of the schooner's crew who had seen a Spaniard furling the sails, had sworn at him as a bungling land-lubber who did not know how to tie a knot.

Captain Kent came out of the cabin all muffled up and went over the side into the waiting boat, after telling Captain Deering that he would row on up the inlet and find the Spanish lumber vessel.

As the boat pulled away in the darkness Benito yawned and said that he would turn in until the captain's return, so went into the cabin, while Skipper Deering also having been on watch since leaving port concluded to snatch a couple of hours' rest until dawn, leaving his mate on duty.

The boat pulled away in the darkness, Kent at the tiller, and after a short while he got his bearings, for in his earlier years he had often cruised in these waters and knew the inlet well.

"The Red Wings is about a league above, men, so give way hard, as I wish to get back with her under cover of the darkness," he said.

The two pirates put all force upon their oars and the boat went rapidly upon its way.

In less than an hour it entered the cove where the Red Wings was in hiding.

A better hiding-place for a vessel could not have been found, for the cove, hardly over half a dozen acres in size, had a narrow entrance and was completely surrounded by bold, rocky shores heavily timbered and with no habitation within miles.

The waters were also deep, and only a craft seeking a retreat could have gone there.

"There she lies," said Kent, as he saw the dark form of the brig lying at anchor.

Hardly had he spoken when sternly over the waters came the hail:

"Boats ho! rest on your oars or I'll fire into you!"

"Bravo for Santo! he is wide awake," muttered the chief, and in a loud voice he called back:

"Ahoy the Red Wings!"

"Ay, ay, but who are you?" came in Santo's voice.

"Kent."

"Our motto?"

"The Wide World our home."

"Ay, ay, sir, come alongside."

The boat moved forward, and soon after the captain stepped on deck, where he was met by Santo.

"My good Santo, you are wide awake, I see."

"Yes, chief, for I have been standing the night watches, as I wished to make sure no man deserted and got to Boston to inform on you."

"I had the traitor with me, Santo; but I have brought him back fortunately."

"It was Verdi."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Yes, but now get the brig under way, set only mainsail and jib, and we'll run down the inlet to where the craft is that brought me here."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"And drop the boat astern that I came in to tow back."

"Yes, senor."

The chief went into his cabin and his steward, a Mexican Indian, lighted his lamp and set wine and refreshments upon the table for him.

"I'll take an early breakfast, Inca, and there will be a guest with me," he said.

Then he changed the suit he wore for his full and gorgeous buccaneer uniform, and going on deck found the Red Wings moving slowly out of the cave, for the wind hardly reached her in that land-locked haven.

It was nearly dawn, but once out into the open inlet the breeze came strong and fair, and sent the beautiful vessel flying along toward the sea.

"Yonder is where the schooner is at anchor, Senor Santo, and it will be just about dawn when we run down to her," said the chief.

In fifteen minutes more the brig's bow was jammed close up into the wind and she glided into the little basin where the schooner Zophiel lay at anchor.

Captain Deering had turned in and was fast asleep, and the mate, expecting no danger, suspecting no trouble, was sleepily leaning against the mainmast, while the watch of the men forward were hardly more than half-awake.

The pirates were stretched about upon the deck asleep, or awake as their humor dictated, and with every confidence in their chief, calmly awaiting developments.

In the cabin Benito sat by one of the stairposts watching and waiting.

He had not turned in as he had said he would, for the officers of Kent the Buccaneer had learned well never to neglect their duty.

The prisoner lay over on his cot, moaning in agony of spirit.

Suddenly the pirate officer arose, for he had seen, what the mate and watch of the schooner had not seen, the Red Wings sweep around the point and head into the cove.

Like a huge specter, and as silently, for no creaking blocks and yards were allowed upon the buccaneer brig.

"Well, Verdi, the Red Wings is coming, so our suspense is over," said Benito, and he again took his stand by the stern ports until he heard long, clear and startling the voice of Kent the Buccaneer hailing:

"Aho! the Zophiel!"

The frightened mate awoke with a start, the watch sprung to their feet in alarm, while the pirate crew arose in the free-and-easy manner of men who understood the situation fully.

"Aho! what craft is that?" shouted the mate when he could collect his drowsy senses.

"The buccaneer craft Red Wings!" came the response, as the brig, having lowered all sail, was gently gliding forward toward the schooner.

Captain Deering came on deck with a bound, for he had heard the ill-omened response to the mate's challenge, that the vessel was the buccaneer Red Wings.

"My God, Lathrop!"

"We are done for!" he cried, anxiously, for he knew that resistance was vain.

As he spoke the Red Wings glided alongside of the schooner, grappels were thrown, and in the dim light of early dawn the skipper beheld the tall, uniformed figure of Kent the Buccaneer, who said politely:

"Have no fear, Captain Deering, for you and your vessel and crew are perfectly safe."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE PIRATE HOST.

CAPTAIN DAN DEERING of the Zophiel was a very much amazed man.

Who would have looked for the terrible buccaneer craft Red Wings in an inlet upon the coast of Massachusetts?

He had considered himself as safe there as though anchored in Boston Harbor.

Not only did he feel sorry for his men and himself, but the good-hearted skipper felt terribly sorry to know that his passengers had to become the prisoners of a pirate.

The fact of the affair had not yet dawned upon him.

But he was not long left in doubt, for with a smile at the look upon the skipper's face Kent the Buccaneer asked:

"Do you recall meeting me before, Captain Deering?"

"Yes."

"When and where?"

"In Bahaman waters, when I was bound on a cruise with a woman on board."

"Do you know who that woman was?"

"I do not."

"Did she not very cleverly deceive you?"

"Completely."

"Well, did I harm you or your vessel then?"

"You acted as square as an honest man then."

"Thank you; but have we not met since?"

"I think not."

"You have a short memory, Captain Deering."

"When was it?"

"I left this schooner just two hours ago."

"Great God!"

"I was muffled up like an invalid and kept out of range of your sharp eyes, but in me you see Captain Mendez of the Spanish merchant brig Carrier Dove."

"Impossible!"

"No, captain, I have been playing the part of Captain Felipe Mendez for some days, and I think I have played it well."

"Too well," muttered the skipper, and Kent the Buccaneer laughed, and then said:

"Now, captain, I will explain my situation to you later, when we breakfast together, for you are to be my guest along with Captain Mendez, whom I am going to ask you to take back to Boston for me, along with his crew."

"I begin to understand, I think."

"Well, you did not understand that Vailed Woman in Black any more than I did. I believed her story and released her and your vessel, though I seldom harm my countrymen, for I am an American."

"I went to the island I once had as a retreat, and found that some one had landed there."

"The newly-made grave told me the story, and investigation gave me an idea of how I had been deceived."

"I sailed for the island she had spoken of as the one where her loved one was buried and

found there had been no landing, so I came on after you, for I believed of course that you knew the truth about the woman."

"I was a couple of leagues astern of the Zophiel when she passed the Boston Light, a narrow escape, was it not?"

"It was indeed, sir."

"Now I say this to you without others hearing me, as I believe you wish to keep your cruise to the Bahamas a secret."

"But when you breakfast with me I'll explain how I came to run into Boston Harbor as an honest Spanish skipper."

"I should like much to hear what you have to tell, Captain Kent, but, what may I consider your intention regarding my vessel and crew?"

"Transfer the purchases you kindly made for me in Boston to my vessel, and when you have breakfasted with me you are at liberty to set sail for home with all dispatch, carrying as I said, Captain Mendez and his crew who are now my prisoners."

"I'll take them of course, sir, and permit me to say: it is a great pity a man of your daring and genius is not an officer of our navy, where you would quickly have risen to be a commodore."

"No, I had the chance to go right, but went wrong."

"My genius is for evil, not good, and when I might never have won fame under an honest flag, I have certainly won a name under my sable ensign with its red wings," and the buccaneer spoke in a manner that showed he seemed to regret having been branded with an ignoble fame.

Bidding Captain Deering to join him in the cabin when he had transferred the cargo brought from Boston, and have his mate get all in readiness for sailing, the chief boarded his own vessel and entered his own luxurious cabin.

There he sent for Captain Felipe Mendez to be brought, and his crew to be freed of their irons and told that they were to be set free.

"Inca, set the table for three, for I will have two guests to breakfast with me, and give us the best meal you can get up."

"Among the stores brought on the schooner from Boston, and which I had purchased for me there, you will find some provisions that will be very acceptable," said Captain Kent to his Indian steward.

Inca had the look of an Indian king rather than that of a servant, and in fact he did date his ancestors back to a royal line who had once ruled over Mexico long before Cortez invaded the country.

He was six feet four inches tall, with massive shoulders, a slender waist, perfect limbs and the strength of a Samson.

His hands and feet were small, his face carved in a perfect mold, and his movements were quick and decided.

He was dressed in the garb of Mexico, wore his jet-black hair very long and was certainly a very picturesque personage, while he was feared by the crew on account of his claiming to possess the powers of the black art.

A better cook and more devoted servant Kent the Buccaneer had never known, and having rescued him from a crowd once who intended putting him to death by burning at the stake, the chief had made him his devoted friend and slave as well.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE BREAKFAST ON THE RED WINGS.

CAPTAIN FELIPE MENDEZ had not been treated very badly since the capture of his vessel.

He had been given a state-room in the ward-room of the Red Wings and ate his meals with Officer Santo, though a guard had been kept constantly over him.

When the Red Wings's commander sent for him to come to his cabin he surely looked for trouble for himself and crew.

The captain was told to go without his guard, a fact that surprised him not a little, and upon reaching the deck found the Zophiel lying alongside the brig.

Officer Santo spoke politely to him and led the way to the chief's cabin with the remark:

"Enter, senor, for Captain Kent expects you."

The Spaniard was in no pleasant mood after being robbed of his vessel, but wisely held his peace.

"Ah, Senor Captain, I am glad to see you."

"Sit down and we'll have a little talk together, for you must breakfast with me, as I have a friend who is also to join us."

The Spaniard looked upon the pleasant manner of the buccaneer chief as he regarded the cat play with a mouse, before devouring it.

But he was wholly at the mercy of the chief, so simply took a seat and awaited the result.

He saw that Inca had set the table for three, and from appearance there was promise of a good breakfast and Captain Mendez was a good liver at home and on board his ship.

"I just returned from Boston, Captain Mendez, and the skipper of the schooner I chartered to bring me back is to breakfast with us and you are to return with him."

"And my crew?"

"Will go with you of course."

"And my brig?"

"Is in Boston, at the very wharf where Captain Deering will land you."

"The truth is, Captain Deering was very cleverly tricked into bringing me here, I having chartered from the schooner's owner, and he was more than surprised when he found that he was in the power of a pirate—ah! here he is," and, as Captain Deering entered, Kent the Buccaneer continued:

"Captain Mendez, of the Spanish brig Carrier Dove, let me present Captain Deering, of the American packet schooner Zophiel."

The two skippers shook hands, and Kent the Buccaneer spoke in English in his introduction, as he had been conversing in Spanish with the Spanish captain.

Captain Mendez spoke English fairly well, and as Inca announced breakfast the two skippers were invited to sit down.

In spite of his gloom the Spaniard ate heartily, and Skipper Deering was really in good humor at his escape from what he had at first regarded as a very close place.

Kent the Buccaneer was a most entertaining host, told good stories, explaining an obtuse point to the Spaniard in his own language, and both men regarded him as certainly a gentleman in manners whatever he might be in character.

After the meal cigars were lighted, and then Kent the Buccaneer said:

"Now, Captain Mendez, I wish to tell Captain Deering of my capture of your vessel."

"By a strange coincidence, on the lookout for prizes, I chased the Zophiel into port and then captured your vessel."

"I desired, for certain reasons of my own, to enter Boston Harbor, so as I had Spaniards in my crew and speak Spanish fairly well myself—"

"You speak it as a Spaniard, senor."

"Thank you, and I was thus enabled to pass as one."

"I ran the Carrier Dove in, reported to the customs officers, showed my papers, passing as Captain Felipe Mendez—"

"Caramba!" ejaculated the Spaniard, savagely.

"It will only disturb your digestion to get angry, Captain Mendez, and matters may not be so bad as they seem for you."

"I called on your people then, Messrs. Arthur Arleigh & Company, and was treated with the utmost courtesy by them."

"Mr. Arleigh, the senior of the firm, insisted upon my dining with him, and gave me a check in full for the cargo of the Carrier Dove!"

"Madre de Dios! you are El Diablo!" cried the Spaniard.

"Thanks for the compliment, senor, for I really consider it so."

"But let me tell you that there was some private stock on hand which was not in the invoice, and this of course belonged to you, and was to be smuggled in."

"No! no! no!" shouted the Spaniard.

"Not yours, eh?"

"How strange; then it must belong to your mate and crew, and as I sold that for a specially high price to Mr. Arleigh, I will not pay you the money, as I intended, but give it to your crew."

"No! no! yes! yes! it was mine, senor, but I failed to have it invoiced, for want of time, at sailing," cried the Spaniard, now speaking in his own language, and Kent, the Buccaneer, resumed:

"Ah! that alters the case, so, as you have suffered enough, I will pay you that money."

"Here it is," and he handed over the sum for the smuggled wines, and the face of the Spaniard showed that he was delighted with the amount received.

"Now, Senor Captain, let me suggest to you that as Arleigh & Company did not buy the vessel or cargo of you, and purchased stolen property, it will be very easy in point of law for you to secure your property from them, and as they are a very rich firm, they will not miss the amount."

"Oh, thank you, senor, thank you."

"You need not thank me, for in suggesting what I do I act for a personal revenge, as I remember what that firm once did to ruin an old man, a very dear benefactor of mine, and knowing his daughter was in distress, did not put forth a hand to help her, though they had made the bulk of their large fortune through her father."

"So you see she is avenged, and I am content," and the look that dwelt upon the face of the buccaneer chief was full of satisfied vengeance, marring for the moment its manly beauty.

CHAPTER XL.

THE RETURN OF THE ZOPHIEL.

"Now, Captain Mendez," resumed the buccaneer, after a pause:

"I sold your vessel, also, as I have hinted at, and in my way conducted myself while in Boston as though I had really been Captain Felipe Mendez of the Carrier Dove."

"I wished to return to my vessel, having accomplished my purpose, so chartered Captain Deering's schooner to bring me here."

"One of my men, acting as second mate, took it into his head to turn traitor, but fortunately Senor Benito discovered his treachery and I dressed up as an American officer, heard his story and led him into my trap."

"He was the man, Captain Deering, whom we brought aboard as one who had been severely injured, but who really was only in double irons and gagged."

"You are indeed a genius, buccaneer," said Captain Deering, with almost admiration of the man before him.

"Now, gentlemen, I have only to say that you are free to return to Boston."

"You, Captain Mendez, will go with your crew back on the schooner without charge as I chartered her for the voyage."

"You can report to the firm of Arleigh & Company that they were taken in by an outlawed, hunted man, and to Mr. Arleigh that he entertained right royally a pirate, but the least said about the smuggled wines the better for his sake and yours."

"If you can regain the price of your cargo, and get back your vessel I shall be glad for your sake."

"You, Captain Deering, will report to your owner, who little dreamed that he had chartered to a pirate."

"He will be nearly crazy when he knows it," said Captain Deering with evident delight at the condition the Jew would get into when he heard his report.

"Now, senors, I wish to give you, as proof that you will not be again molested upon these seas, in commanding your vessels, this pledge."

"If overhauled by a buccaneer craft simply show to her commander this pledge, and they will respect it."

He arose as he spoke and took from a drawer two black balls on one side of which was done in mosaic-work a pair of spread scarlet wings.

Upon the other side were the words set in gold:

"Buccaneers respect this pledge. KENT."

"These have a private mark, senors, known to all Sea Thieves, and I would suggest that you do not tell other sailors to duplicate them, thus attempting to go free under false colors, for the man who offers a *bogus* pledge, will be hung at once to the yard-arm of his vessel."

"So warn your friends that no counterfeit pledge will pass."

"I wish to thank you, Captain Kent, for your extreme courtesy to me," said Captain Deering, examining the really beautiful pledge the chief had given them.

The Spaniard also expressed his thanks, and Captain Deering said:

"Now, Captain Kent, with your permission I would like to set sail."

"You are at liberty to do so, senor, at your pleasure."

Though very pleasantly entertained the two captains were anxious to get away, the Spaniard being fearful lest the buccaneer might change his mind and take back his money at least.

So the chief led the way to the deck and ordered his own men to get sail on the schooner and the anchors up, saying with a smile:

"My lads knotted your ropes pretty well, Captain Deering, and dropped both anchors purposely."

"But farewell, senors, and a pleasant voyage to you."

Captain Deering set the example of offering his hand, while the Spaniard followed, the former remarking:

"I never expected to offer my hand to Kent the Buccaneer, sir, but I do so, and I only hope that you will give up your lawless life before the inevitable comes to you."

"You mean the yard-arm?"

"Yes, sir."

"I shall never be hanged, Captain Deering, and I have abiding faith in the belief that I was born to be drowned," and the buccaneer raised his hat politely.

The two captains then stepped on board the schooner, whither the crew of the Spanish captain had already gone, and the grapnels were cast loose.

Held by a stern line the schooner swung away from the brig, setting her topsails and everything that would draw as she did so, for the breeze was a stiff one and fair for her course.

Hardly had she left the side of the Red Wings, when Kent the Buccaneer ordered the anchor up and sail set on the brig.

It was done with a quickness and skill that won the admiration of those on the schooner, who however felt a slight dread that the buccaneer had changed his mind and was coming in pursuit.

On flew the Zophiel and her every inch of canvas was drawing.

After her rushed the Red Wings and she was a grandly beautiful sight with every sail up and drawing her along at a tremendous speed.

She overhauled the schooner before she reached the mouth of the inlet, drove by to leeward and so near as to cause all on the Zophiel to dread a collision, and as she felt the surf running inshore, had left the pretty and fleet little craft in her wake, fast as she was.

Straight out to sea she headed, while the schooner after gaining an offing turned her sharp bows in the direction of Boston, keeping as close inshore as she dared.

When at last a long league of sea lay between the two vessels, the Spanish captain heaved a deep sigh of relief in which his crew joined in chorus to a man.

"We are safe now, senor," he said to Captain Deering.

"Not if Kent should take it into his head to catch us, for yonder craft does not sail like anything I ever saw carry sail before," said Captain Deering, and his words caused the Spaniard to wince, while he glanced again anxiously in the direction of the brig.

But there was no sign of her putting around and cruising in chase of the schooner, and all watched more freely when they saw her fading away from sight in the distance.

So on her way went the Zophiel and that night as Gripstein was about to retire he received a visitor from Captain Deering, and a startling one it was too.

CHAPTER XLI.

STARTLING TIDINGS.

A KNOCK at his door, when the hour was nearing midnight, startled Moses Gripstein half out of his wits, for he always had robbers in his mind.

Emanuel was called out of bed, Zophiel was told to light all the lamps in the house, and then the money-lender raised the courage to put his head out of the window and ask:

"Vell, who vas it dere at a shentilman's house so late like it vas?"

"Pardon, Mr. Gripstein, but I came up expecting you had not retired, and seeing a light, made bold to knock."

"Who vas you?"

"Captain Dan Deering."

"Vas you sure it vas you?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"So I thought it vas when I asked you. I send Emanuel down to open t'e doers."

Then turning to Emanuel, he said:

"If it vas not t'e captains, shust kill him."

"Yes, uncle," and the youth went down to the door.

In a few moments he returned with Captain Deering.

"Vell, captains, I thought you vas away mit t'e schooners."

"I dropped anchor, sir, not half an hour ago, and as I had so much to tell you, I decided to come up to-night and take the chance of your having retired."

"Vell, ve make a goot t'ing if he don't vant t'e schooners any longer."

"No, sir; he finished with the schooner. But have you an idea who it was that chartered the Zophiel?"

"He vas a shentilman, for he pay my price without von vord," replied Gripstein, who considered one who did that to be a gentleman.

"Do you know that he was not Captain Mendez?"

"Not Captain Mendez, you vas say?"

"He was not."

"Vell, who vas he, mine fri'nt?"

"A man sailing under false colors."

"You have prought pack t'e schooners, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Dere vas nopodys kill?"

"No, sir."

"Vell, I have t'e monish for t'e charters, so I don't care who he vas."

"Well, Mr. Gripstein, I do care, for the vessel was chartered by none other than Kent the Buccaneer!"

The Jew sprung to his feet with a yell.

"Who vas you say he vas?"

"Kent the Buccaneer."

"T'e Red Wings Rover?"

"The same, sir."

"Mein Gott! v'at vas you tell me, mine fri'nt?"

Captain Deering had wished to discover if Moses Gripstein really knew who the charterer of his vessel was.

The thought had flashed into his mind that perhaps after all the buccaneer was in league with the Jew.

He feared that Moses was his agent for the sale of booty.

If not, how had Captain Kent found out the Jew, and paid to him the charter money for his vessel?

Nothing that the pirate had said had given him reason to believe that they were leagued together; in fact, the buccaneer had really led him to believe the other way, merely hinting, when the captain had touched upon the subject, that he had gone to him for a loan.

Now he saw that Moses was not acting.

His manner was not feigned, but full of genuine amazement, and fear as well.

Had he believed the money-lender a secret ally of the buccaneer, Captain Deering would not have remained another hour in his service.

He knew that Moses Gripstein was a shrewd man, making his money by large interests demanded from the needy, but he had not believed

him really a dishonorable man, or that he would do an illegal act.

Had he thought so, the high sense of honor of the old sailor would have made him leave the service of the Jew at once.

He had a vessel of his own which made long voyages to other lands, but he placed his bachelor brother in command of her, not wishing to remain a year at a time away from his family and home, while he, not to be idle, took charge of the pretty schooner Zophiel.

Moses Gripstein paid him liberally, and he had a week in port after each round voyage, which lasted only a month, and he liked immensely the beautiful little schooner.

So it was with a troubled heart that he had gone up to see Moses, fearing that he really knew all about the buccaneer and his daring manner of entering port in the Spanish brig Carrier Dove.

But he felt that he was mistaken, for he was amused at the positive fright shown by Moses as he told the strange story of his adventure.

"And t'e real captain's come back mit you, mine fri'nt?" asked Moses, after hearing the whole story.

"He did, sir."

"And his men?"

"They also came with me."

"Vell, dere vas somedings for t'e passage monish," said Moses, his hope of gain asserting itself.

"No, no. Mr. Gripstein, you were paid for the charter, liberally as you told me, and these people were so unfortunate as to lose their vessel, while in fact they were the guests of Kent the Buccaneer and so sent into port, and I am sure if he knew you demanded pay he would in some way demand satisfaction, for he is very revengeful, and as you know, dares to enter even Boston Harbor when he wishes to do so," and Captain Deering was particularly fervent, not wishing to force the poor Spaniards to pay for their passage into port.

His words startled Moses, who said quickly:

"Dat vas so, mine fri'nt."

"I did not think of dat."

"But vill t'e law beebles make me troubles apout letting t'e puccaneers have mine vessel?"

"No, I think they will say nothing, for you were deceived by the man as were the custom officers, the firm of Arleigh & Company and all other with whom he had dealings."

"Of course I will have to tell my story and that will exonerate you, sir."

"Vell, dat vas goot, and, captains, I wishes to make you a leetle present for your troubles and loss of minds, for you must have been half scared crazy," and Moses in a fit of generosity forced upon the acceptance of the gallant sailor a couple of months' pay, while he opened a bottle of his best wine to drink before they parted.

When he left it was nearly dawn and Captain Deering was told at once to put the schooner upon the ways for a thorough overhauling, for Moses wished to attract no crowds going to the harbor to see the vessel which had been chartered by Kent the Buccaneer.

CHAPTER XLII.

ARTHUR ARLEIGH & CO.

THE senior member of the rich firm of Arthur Arleigh & Co. came down to his office in cheerful mood, for business was going well with him, and he had the evening before had such a very liberal offer for his new purchase, the brig Carrier Dove, that he had decided to sell it, after sleeping upon it over night.

He had bought the brig for the use of the firm, but a merchant compelled to have just such a vessel immediately, had offered him twice the sum he had paid for her, and with this a larger vessel, and one to their own liking, could be built.

Then, too, he had made a personal speculation in the rare old wines brought over by Captain Mendez, and which had paid no duty, so he was considerably the richer on those.

The cargo brought by the brig had gone like "hot cakes," so take it all in all the firm of Arleigh & Co. was jubilant.

Mr. Arleigh had just written a note to the merchant who wanted the brig, stating that he had decided to accept his price offered for the Carrier Dove, when a clerk came in to say that a man who said he was Captain Mendez was anxious to see him.

"What has he returned for?"

"It is not the Captain Mendez of the brig, sir."

"Show him in, anyhow."

So into the office came Captain Felipe Mendez.

"You are the senior, of the firm of Arleigh & Company?"

"I am, sir, and you are—"

"Felipe Mendez, the real captain of the Carrier Dove."

"My dear sir, you are crazy."

"I am in my sober senses, sir, as I will convince you."

"I am Felipe Mendez, and sailed as captain of the brig Carrier Dove, which I own, with a cargo of wines and other freight for your firm."

"You are an impostor, sir."

"You speak Spanish, I was told, sir."
"Perfectly," said Arleigh, with pardonable pride at his accomplishment.

"Then listen to my story in my own language."

"I am pressed for time, my friend, and if you wish to talk I'll turn you over to one of my clerks who is not so busy."

"But, senior, you must hear me, for I tell you you have been imposed on by an impostor."

"I was brought to off this port by a vessel I deemed an American brig-of-war, I was boarded and then I found it to be the buccaneer Red Wings."

Mr. Arleigh smiled blandly, and said:

"And you were robbed, of course, and now come to us to help you out; but, sir, we have seen the real Captain Mendez, have unloaded the cargo of the Carrier Dove and bought the vessel, so you come too late, entirely too late."

Captain Mendez was in despair, but would not give up his task of proving his identity, and said again:

"See here, senior, you have been the one imposed upon as I can prove."

"What proof can you trump up against facts?"

"I would ask if you know Captain Dan Deering of the schooner Zophiel?"

"I know him well."

"Will you send for him and ask if my vessel was not seized by Kent the Buccaneer, who, speaking Spanish well, assumed to be myself, and putting Spaniards of his crew on board, ran my vessel into port with my papers, sold the cargo to you, and my vessel, too."

"See here, my man, you make bold assertions which you can give no proof of being the truth," and Mr. Arleigh began to feel very uneasy.

"He told me that he sold you some rare wines that were not invoiced, and which you took from him and—"

"See here, man, you say Captain Dan Deering knows of this?"

"He does, for he carried the crew back to their vessel and discovered then who he was, and he brought one crew here with him, from the Red Wings, when we were Buccaneer Kent's prisoners."

Mr. Arleigh groaned, and then called loudly for a clerk.

When one came he ordered Captain Deering to be sent for and also that his two partners should at once come to the office.

Then he turned to Captain Mendez and told him it would be wise to say nothing about the private goods on the Carrier Dove, and which he had individually bought.

The two partners soon appeared and then Captain Mendez went over his story from his capture by Kent the Buccaneer to his release.

The whole firm were astounded, and then Captain Deering who had just come from having his vessel put on the ways, put in an appearance and the story was corroborated *in toto*.

The rich firm of Arleigh & Co. was in a quandary.

They could doubt no longer, and Captain Mendez was known to be the real commander of the Carrier Dove.

They knew that they had been deceived, that they had paid a large sum for a cargo of stolen goods, while they had purchased a stolen vessel.

They were responsible for the cargo to the merchants in Spain, for they had it in their possession and had paid the thief only for it.

They were responsible to Captain Mendez for his vessel, as they had bought it from the Sea Thief himself, not from the owner.

At last an inspiration seized the senior member.

He knew, all of them knew that they would have to pay for the cargo and vessel, but Mr. Arleigh determined to escape paying more than he had to, so he said:

"Well, Captain Mendez, we were shamefully deceived, but we accept the misfortune to ourselves and are willing to compromise."

"Compromise, senior?"

"Yes, captain, to pay you a fair sum for cargo and vessel."

"Senior, there can be no compromise, for I have seen Lawyer Duane, and he says that you must pay every dollar to the rightful owners."

It was a hard blow, but the senior member was going to accept the situation manfully, so said:

"Well, we will consult our attorney and if he says we must pay in full we will give you our check for all tomorrow: but why this pirate robbed us so heavily I cannot understand."

"Permit me to say, sir, that he acted from revenge, your firm having swamped some old man and failed to aid his needy daughter," said Captain Deering.

"Ha! old Curtis—ah! that pirate is none other than that scape grace Kent Curtis," cried the senior partner, and Captain Deering gave him credit for hitting very quickly upon the name of the man the firm had brought to financial ruin.

CHAPTER XLIII.

LIKE LIGHTNING FROM A CHEERLESS SKY.

A THRILL of something like terror ran through the hearts of the good people of Boston,

when they learned that the daring rover, Captain Kent, was in their vicinity, had been, in fact, in their very midst.

He had come in so boldly, had planned and carried out an act of unheard-of daring, which would have been, in a good cause, called heroism.

He had walked their streets, dined with their most princely merchant, and chartered a crack craft to run out with, even deceiving the old veteran Captain Dan Deering.

His manner of treating them was admirable, and won some praise, but why he had come into Boston no one knew, no one could guess.

Such were the rumors upon the street, and the talk in the homes of the good people, during the day, and by night gossips had it that the pirate had been guilty of a score of terrible deeds in the city.

The next morning all eagerly bought the morning papers, for it had been said full particulars would be given in them.

The *Vigilant Eye* contained the best particulars, which were as follows:

"KENT THE BUCCANEER!"

A Most Daring Deed!

THE PIRATE RED WINGS IN OUR WATERS!

OUR CITIZENS AROUSED!

"We are so fortunate as to be able to place before our readers the full particulars of the most daring act that has ever been known, perpetrated in our very midst by no less a person than the famous and infamous pirate chief, Kent the Buccaneer."

"The deeds of this bold rover are well known, as for years he has swept the seas from Nova Scotia to Cape Horn, his principal cruising ground being in the Gulf, the Atlantic Coast of Florida, and the West Indies."

"No this bold despoiler is no one knows, but that he is an American is certain, and rumor has it that he is an outlawed naval officer who turned pirate from revenge."

"Broad hints have been heard that he is from Boston, the son of a once worthy and wealthy citizen here, but until the truth can be known we will not wound his honest kindred by mention of his name."

"But certain it is that Kent the Buccaneer came into our midst and remained here for days, walked our streets fearlessly, and when he got ready to depart he did so in the same cool, clever manner in which he entered our port."

"We have interviewed those who met and had dealings with him, and they were completely deceived."

"His victims were the wealthy firm of Arthur Arleigh & Co., and Captain Felipe Mendez who had a Spanish brig consigned to the above firm."

"The firm had purchased a cargo of Spanish wines and other things, it seems, and the Carrier Dove, Captain Felipe Mendez, brought the freight over."

"The captain owned the brig, and having some interest in the cargo, the payments were to be made to him, so this placed a great deal of power in the hands of the pirate who captured the vessel."

"The Red Wings chased the beautiful schooner Zophiel into port, barely missing capturing her."

"The Zophiel is owned by Mr. Moses Gripstein, a wealthy money-lender of our town, and runs as a packet on the coast, but was lately chartered for a voyage to southern waters, and it was upon her return the Red Wings gave pursuit."

"She is commanded by that old veteran sea-captain, Dan Deering."

"The Red Wings, be it remembered, was bought by the Government and fitted out as a brig-of-war, being placed under the command of Captain Harold Hartwell to go on special service and hunt down Kent and other buccaneers."

"She is one of the fleetest and most beautiful vessels afloat, and with as splendid armament and full crew, ran into the harbor of the buccaneers' island retreat and found all desolation, for the Restless brig-of-war, Captain Clifford Carr, had been there before her, captured the stronghold, waited for the return of the chief in his schooner Red Wings and captured his vessel also, and all through the aid of a boy captive of the pirates, Claude Cassiday, who is now a middy in our navy and whose mother lives in our city."

"Captain Hartwell camped his men ashore, believing the island deserted, and the chief lying in hiding with his men went by night and seized the almost deserted brig."

"He courteously sent the crew of the Storm Bird home in a small vessel, and changing the name of the brig to Red Wings began his career."

"He sighted the Spanish brig Carrier Dove, after giving up chasing the Zophiel, and captured her."

"Looking over the papers of Captain Mendez he concocted the daring plan of impersonating that officer and with a number of Spaniards in his crew went on board the brig and headed for this port, while the Red Wings was sent to Blind Bay to await his return."

"He played his part so well that he sold his cargo to Arleigh & Co., got the money, dined with Mr. Arleigh at his home, then concluded to dispose of his vessel and got paid cash for that."

"He walked and drove about the city, admiring its beauties the days that his vessel was discharging her cargo, and then chartered the Zophiel to take himself and men to Blind Bay where he said a Spanish vessel, commanded by a friend of his, was loading with lumber, and he would return in her to Spain."

"A note received at our office from Mrs. Harold Hartwell states that her horse took fright and ran away, upon the evening the pirate sailed in the Zophiel, the coachman was thrown from the box, and the animals would have dashed over Cliff Edge Road but for a gentleman seizing them, and, after running alongside for a while, bravely bringing them to a halt."

"This gentleman, she said, gave the name of 'Cap-

tain Mendez, was dressed as a Spanish sailor, and upon her urging, accepted a glass of wine in her house, while he said to her little daughter, who said she would pray for him ever for his deed, that he feared even her prayers would not avail him."

"There is no doubt but that this was Kent the Buccaneer."

"He then went to the wharves, boarded the Zophiel, carrying on board with him on a cot one of his crew who had sought to betray him, pretending that he had been badly hurt, so that as he lay on his cot Captain Deering could not see that he was gagged and ironed."

"We learn that there was a Spanish sailor called at Military Headquarters, and said that he would call again to see the commander, who was out, as he had most important news to impart to him."

"The Zophiel sailed for Blind Bay with her pirate passengers, and dropping anchor in an inlet soon saw the Red Wings coming in."

"Escape was impossible, and the pirate declared himself, released Captain Mendez, who was a prisoner on board, and had the Spaniard and Captain Deering breakfast with him in his luxuriously furnished cabin."

"He treated the two charmingly, paid the charter money for the Zophiel, and told Captain Mendez as Arleigh & Co. had bought stolen property he could regain his vessel and value of the cargo."

"Then he released the Spanish prisoners, told Captain Deering to cast off, and the schooner started for home."

"Captain Deering says that the brig is in splendid condition, the wild-looking crew under perfect discipline, and describes the daring pirate as a finely formed, courteous-mannered, handsome man, who scarcely seems to have reached his fortieth year."

"In spite of the great speed of the Zophiel, the captain says the Red Wings rushed by her, soon after starting, as though she was at anchor, showing fleet how the pirate craft is."

"Such is the story of the visit of Kent, the Buccaneer, to our port, and we hope we may soon report the capture and hanging of this most daring Sea Thief."

CHAPTER XLIV.

AN EXPENSIVE TOY.

THE firm of Arleigh & Co. made up their minds to make the best of a bad bargain and get credit for it in the eyes of the public.

So they paid Captain Mendez for his cargo of wines, and told him they would buy his vessel at a stated sum.

It was less than they had given the buccaneer, but he took it, deciding to make the United States his home for the future.

Then the firm sold the brig to the parties who had been bargaining for her, and which necessity compelled them to take at a sum which greatly reduced their losses on the cargo of wines, which showed that the senior member was a very shrewd man in managing affairs for Arleigh & Co.

Of course the papers gave them full credit for their magnanimous deed, as perhaps they would not have had to pay had a law-suit been instituted, or they could have compromised for a part of the money.

But, the papers said, Arleigh & Co. were not made of that kind of material, and so the people believed.

The Zophiel was put upon the ways, to undergo a thorough overhauling, and then came orders to have the work stopped as Mr. Moses Gripstein had an opportunity of disposing of her at a fair price.

It seems that one day, soon after the visit of the buccaneer, there drove up to the office door of Moses Gripstein a most stylish carriage and horses, with coachman and footman on the box.

All knew the carriage as belonging to the rich and aristocratic Mrs. Harold Hartwell, and it was a surprise to see her at the door of the money-lender.

Moses came out with stolid face, being sure that she had come for a loan, and grumbling at having been bidden to come to the carriage.

He always had the same look for borrowers, with an abiding respect and obsequiousness for all who did not need his aid.

"You vas vant to see me, madam?" he said, coldly.

"Are you Gripstein, the Jewish money-lender?" was the cool inquiry.

"I vas Moses Gripstein," said the Jew, slightly awed.

"You are, then, the owner of the schooner Zophiel?"

"I vas."

"I desire to purchase a vessel suitable for a yacht, and from what I have read of your craft, she may be desirable."

"Yes, madam, she vas a beautiful vessel," said Moses, brightening up, and now beginning to bow and scrape in the presence of one rich enough to buy a vessel as a pleasure craft only.

"Where is she now?"

"At t'e ways, being repaired."

"Send and stop work on her, please, for if she suits me I will need changes made at once."

"You vill vant to know t'e price?"

"What do you consider her worth?"

"She vas vort' far more den I can get, madam, for she vas a splendid vessels."

"She vas built for a Cuban gentilmans for his yacht, and she vas so lovely as never vas."

"Name your price, please," said Mrs. Hartwell, coldly.

"Vell, as it vas you, madam, I sells her so sheap!"

"I do not care for favors, sir, so name your price and oblige me."

"Vell, I sell t'e Zophiel to you for seven thousand tollars, madam."

"I will drive down to see the craft, and to-morrow will give you an answer."

"If I take her I shall change the horrid name she bears," and with this the elegant and beautiful Mrs. Hartwell drove on her way, leaving Moses quite crushed at her superiority.

She drove down to where the schooner was, and Captain Deering approached the carriage, and raising his hat politely, asked how he could serve her.

"I am Mrs. Harold Hartwell, sir, and have just seen Mr. Gripstein in regard to the purchase of his vessel."

"Are you Captain Deering?"

"I am, madam."

"Then, sir, I should like to have you remain captain of the craft, selecting your own crew, until the return of my husband from foreign seas."

"May I ask you to let me go on board and suggest what changes and improvements I wish made, so that you may have it done?"

Captain Deering bowed, and aided the lady and little Celeste to alight, then showing them over the yacht.

Half an hour after the carriage rolled away, and Captain Deering had orders to transfer the Zophiel into a yacht, sparing no expense in doing so, and to have her name changed to the *White Wings*.

"I shall send for Mr. Gripstein to-morrow, and pay him the money, Captain Deering, and if you will call at Overlook Lodge, I will also pay you the amount you will need for repairs," she had said as she drove away, while, looking after her, the captain mused:

"I am in luck, for this gets me out of old Grip's service, gives me the same pay, and keeps me near home all the time; but what a whim for a woman, to arm a yacht!"

"And what an expensive toy she will find it, too; but they say she is enormously rich, and she must be to live as she does."

CHAPTER XLV.

DRAWING UPON THE SECRET TREASURE.

THE night after Mrs. Hartwell's visit to the office of Gripstein, that gentleman received a visitor whom he had once before met.

It was the veiled lady who had come to him for a loan on a former occasion, and this time her errand was the same.

"You vas vant some more monish to borrow, mees?" he said, as Emanuel ushered her into his sitting-room, at night, and Zophiel, who was there when she entered, arose and retired.

"What a beautiful girl," said the veiled visitor, admiringly, gazing after her.

"She vas my niece, mees, and she vas a goot girls."

"She appears to be, and is very beautiful; but not at all like you, is she?"

Moses prided himself upon his good looks, and he was a fine-looking man, so this shot cut him, and he said, quickly:

"You vas vant to borrow some monish, mees?"

"I wish to sell some gems, sir."

"Vell, v're vas dey?"

"Here," and she placed before him a velvet case of fine jewels.

There were diamonds, rubies and emeralds, a score of each.

Still fretting on the hit at his looks, Moses said, sharply:

"V're you gets all dese gems?"

"That is none of your business, sir," was the sharp response.

"Vell, you wants to sell 'em?"

"If you wish to buy, yes, if not, say so and there are others I can go to—Gemheismers & Co."

The last named were the rivals of Moses and he hated them sincerely, and said with alacrity:

"Oh, I takes 'em, only I did not vas acquainted with you, mess."

"And you are far from likely to be, sir."

"Vell, dey is vort' a goot deal."

"I well know that."

"I vill have to give you a check."

This was a sudden plan of Moses to keep a detective on hand at the bank to follow the woman the next day when she presented the check and discover who she was, for he had an abiding curiosity to know.

"I do not live here, sir, so could not use your check."

"If you have not the money I can go to Gemheismers—"

"No, no, I vill see if I cannot raise it for you in monish," and he began to examine the gems.

He weighed and valued the rubies and placed them to one side.

The emeralds followed and the diamonds came last.

"How much you wants for 'em?"

"You are the purchaser, so say what you will give?"

"Vell, I give you ten thousand dollars."

"Just one half their market value if sold in set in jewelry."

"V'y didn't you say you knows dat before?" angrily said Moses.

"I will say now that I wish just fifteen thousand dollars for them, no more, no less, and you can sell them to-morrow, as you know, unset as they are, for a most liberal advance on that sum."

"I give you twelve."

"No, sir."

"I makes it thirteen."

"No, sir."

"Vell, I give you t'e fourteen thousands."

"I said fifteen."

"You did?"

"Yes, so quit bickering and say yes or no quickly."

"I vill take 'em," and Moses sighed.

He counted out the money and asked if Emanuel should not see her home as a protector:

"I'll see that he does not follow me, sir, for I am not unprotected to-night as one who dogs my steps will discover."

With this threat she left the house and it would have taken a braver lad than Emanuel to have followed her.

"Don't you thinks you petter go, Emanuel?" asked Moses.

"No, uncle, you go," the youth had said, and Moses said no more.

The visitor, meanwhile, waited a short way off, to see that she was not followed, and then hastened away, her steps leading her by a side gate into the elegant home of the Hartwells.

The following morning Moses Gripstein received word to call at Overlook Lodge, and dressing himself in his best, he obeyed.

He gazed about him with delight at the evidences of wealth about him, and regretted that he had not asked a higher price for the Zophiel.

Mrs. Hartwell swept into the room in a superb morning dress, and Moses departed soon after with the pay for his vessel in his pockets.

Later in the day Captain Deering called and was received quite graciously.

He reached to Mrs. Hartwell a slip upon which were the builder's, rigger's and furnisher's estimates upon the vessel, and his own statement of actual expenses per month for ordinary cruising about the bay.

Mrs. Hartwell promptly handed over the sums for the vessel, and an additional amount for any extra expenses that might arise, adding:

"Now, Captain Deering, I leave all in your hands, and when the *White Wings* is ready, let her anchorage ground be off the bluff yonder."

"Opposite the Cassidy Cottage, Mrs. Hartwell, is the best anchorage and an easy landing place."

"Very well, you know best, sir."

A few weeks after the beautiful little vessel, under her new name of *White Wings*, was anchored just off the Cassidy Cottage.

And from the piazza of her modest home Helen Cassidy gazed out upon the beautiful vessel, little dreaming of its history, and how it had come into the possession of the rich Celia Hartwell.

She had been deeply moved by the strange meeting with Kent Curtis, for it had called up bitter memories of the past, and that she had to mourn her noble husband, Claude Cassidy.

She had read all about the man she knew so well, of his bold piracy of the *Carrier Dove*, and she had said to herself:

"What a hero such a man could have become had he only have been honorable instead of choosing the downward path of dishonor."

"Had his career been for good and not evil, I believe I could have learned to love him."

And she would gaze out upon the *Red Wings*, little dreaming that in truth it belonged to her, that she had been defrauded of the secret legacy left by her husband and recovered by a woman.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A BOLD VENTURE.

WHEN the *Red Wings* sailed away from Blind Bay, passing the Zophiel upon her course seaward, Kent the Buccaneer had stood upon his quarter-deck and politely raised his hat to the Spanish captain and Skipper Deering as he went by.

The salute was returned, but it will be recalled that all on board the Zophiel were alarmed lest the buccaneer should change his mind about allowing them to go, and give chase after the schooner to recapture her.

But of this Captain Kent had not the slightest intention, for he had safely and well accomplished his mission.

He knew that the whole New England Coast would soon ring with the news of his daring deed, and a score of cruisers perhaps would be sent in search of him.

But he had set his mind upon accomplishing another bold deed and he was, after running the schooner out of sight, going to change his course, head northward, and run for the Kennebec.

When in Boston he had learned that his former vessel, the *Red Wings*, the schooner in which he had made his name a terror, was at Bath on the Kennebec River.

She had been taken from him by Captain Restless of the brig-of-war *Reckless*, and he

would have lost his life but for the kind-heartedness of Claude Cassidy, who remembering the chiefs kindness to him had aided his escape.

The schooner, so Kent the Buccaneer learned in Boston, was being fitted out for an American cruiser, and she was at anchor below the tow with only an officer and half a dozen seamen as a guard on board, awaiting the arrival of her crew, who were to be taken from the *Restless* brig-of-war which was to take the captured craft's place to be repaired.

All this Kent had learned by inquiry in Boston and he made up his mind to take a run up into the Kennebec.

He had dearly loved his old vessel, and more, when he lost her he had been forced to leave on board, in a secret hiding-place, which he alone knew the existence of, all of his own treasure, except the belt of gold and gems which he always wore about his waist in case of just such an emergency as had occurred.

In that secret hiding-place on the schooner were massive silver plate, some gold and silver bullion, jewelry of rare value and some bags of golden ounces, in all quite a fortune.

Though the schooner had been put on the ways and overhauled from keel to trucks, from rudder to bowsprit, he had little fear that the secret repository would be discovered, and that he would find his treasure intact.

So it was that after leaving the Zophiel out of sight, he changed his course and headed for Sequin Island.

He knew that there was a fort at the mouth of the river, but this did not trouble him in the least.

"I will have soldiers to deal with, not sailors, Santo, and they will not know the difference," he said to his first officer in explaining his intention.

"But the coming back, senor," suggested officer Santo.

"Oh, I'll run by under fire if they don't believe me to be what I shall represent myself," was the cool response.

Sequin Island, high and barren, was sighted early in the afternoon of the second day, and the bold coast of Maine rose rapidly under the fleet sailing toward it of the *Red Wings*.

Leaving Sequin Island to starboard just at twilight, the *Red Wings* headed into the Kennebec with the wind, a stiff one, abeam.

A short way up the river the fort loomed up dark and threatening, and a shot was soon fired across her bows, for in those days there was nothing allowed to go up or down the river without knowing just what the vessel was.

The brig shortened sail rapidly after the shot, heading closer in to the fort, and as her speed was slackened there came the hail:

"Brig ahoy! what brig is that?"

"The United States brig-of-war *Restless*, Captain Clifford Carr commanding, going up to Bath for repairs."

"Ay, ay, Carr; glad to have you dine with me to-morrow—I am Major Wainwright."

"Ah, yes; glad to do so to-morrow, Major—what hour?" coolly asked Kent.

"Come early and bring any of your officers you may wish."

"Ay, ay, sir; and thank you!" shouted back the buccaneer, for the brig had passed the fort, and turning to Santo he said, with a reckless laugh:

"If he did not know Captain Carr I would take him at his word."

"But crowd on sail, Santo, for we must get out of the river to-night if we can."

On up the river sailed the brig until the twinkling of lights ahead denoted the town of Bath, at that time a great ship-building port.

The buccaneer chief was not certain what would be his reception.

He only knew that he had the fleetest craft afloat, a splendid crew and heavy battery, and would fight a ship of the line if necessary to do so.

He had tried to find out if there were any vessels-of-war in port, but could not do so, and the chances were that he would find several there.

He had often been at Bath in his younger days, and once had anchored there for a month or more, so that he knew pretty well the surroundings.

He shortened sail as he drew nearer, and then dropped anchor and lowered a boat.

It was the first cutter and the men he sent in it were all well armed.

Taking the tiller himself he called back to Santo:

"If we have to run for it, I will wave the red lantern three times in a circle, and fire three pistol-shots rapidly, so keep your eye on the river, and be ready to crowd on sail and get up anchor by the time we reach you."

"If I need your aid, I will have my men fire three distinct volleys, for I have the extra muskets aboard, and then sail up opposite the town with guns run out and men at quarters."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Santo and the cutter moved away in the darknes.

Taking his bearing from his memory of the place, Captain Kent steered close in under the shadows of the land, and as the oars were muffled the boat moved noiselessly along.

Nearer and nearer it drew until suddenly

there loomed up, anchored off the town, a large vessel-of-war.

"I feared it," muttered the chief, and a moment after he said:

"There lies the schooner above the frigate, and I shall board her; but, I only wish I knew the name of that vessel-of-war."

And straight for the schooner the cutter was headed.

CHAPTER XLVII.

RUNNING THE GANTLET.

THE keen eyes of Kent the Buccaneer had discovered his old vessel lying at anchor close inshore, but further up the river than the frigate, and just off the lower part of the town.

He could not be deceived in the craft he had so long made his home.

He was in under the shadow of the land, so was hardly seen from the frigate, but if so, was not challenged.

"He had been told that there was only a lieutenant of marines and six men on board as a guard, but this might be a mistake, and he must be prepared to find more.

So he knew not what odds were against him. He had gotten almost up to the schooner when a sleepy hail was heard:

"Boat ahoy! what boat is that?"

"Boat from the brig-of-war Restless, sir, which is anchored a mile below," answered the buccaneer.

"Ay ay, come alongside, and I'll wake up the lieutenant," was the answer.

On pulled the cutter, the fact of her oars being muffled not having struck the man on watch, and running alongside of the schooner Chief Kent sprung on board followed by his men.

A sergeant of marines met him, and there were two marines on duty forward and amidship, these were all, and as the lieutenant was in his cabin, the report that there was but a squad on board was true.

The buccaneer was in uniform and the sergeant saluted, while he said:

"The lieutenant will see you, sir, in a few minutes."

"I am an old friend of his so will take the liberty of going at once into the cabin, sergeant. "Coxswain, see to these men," and with this the chief went aft and entered the cabin.

The coxswain understood what the chief meant in telling him to "see to these men," and proceeded to do so very promptly.

"I'll send my men forward, sergeant, as we have come to stay," he said, and in an instant he had a pistol at the head of the marine while the sailors moved forward and seized the other two on watch with equal quickness and decision.

"Sergeant, you are my prisoner, and an outcry will cause your death," said the coxswain.

The sergeant and his men were taken by surprise completely.

They were expecting the Restless in port and not the shadow of a suspicion that anything was wrong crossed their minds.

They were seized, ironed and gagged with an alacrity and skill which showed that the pirates had had much practice in such work.

Then the coxswain and six men went below with a lantern to capture the other marines, and it was done without an outcry or any trouble, for they too were caught completely off guard.

In the mean time Captain Kent had descended to the cabin.

The lamp showed him the lieutenant hastily dressing, and before the latter could speak a pistol covered his heart and he heard the stern words:

"Lieutenant, you are my prisoner!"

"Who the deuce are you?" gasped the surprised and somewhat alarmed officer.

"Kent the Buccaneer."

"Oh, Lord!"

"If you know me you'll do well to obey, for I mean you no harm, unless you cause me to kill you."

"Oh, I know you, you red-handed pirate, and you have got me foul I'll admit."

"You've come after your vessel, I suppose?"

"No, but I'll talk to you after I have put you in irons."

"Not me!"

The chief gave a low call, and feet were heard on deck coming toward the cabin.

The next moment four men appeared in the companionway.

"Do you submit, sir, or shall I use force?"

"I'm no fool to kick against a stone wall, Sir Pirate."

"No, you are wise beyond your years; but I'll have to iron you, and gag you, too, unless you give me your pledge not to call for aid."

"Don't trust me, for I'm easily led into temptation, and the frigate is within call."

"Gag him, men," came the command.

Then Kent said:

"I wish first to secure some property I have on this schooner."

"She was stripped of everything except her guns," said the lieutenant, just before the gag was put in his mouth.

"You are mistaken, sir, and as the chief spoke he touched a spring in the partition of the

starboard state room, opening into the cabin, and one of the panels slowly slid aside, revealing that there was a *double partition or wall*.

It was arranged with shelves, and wide enough to contain massive silver plate.

"It took off ten inches from the side of the state-room, lieutenant, but made a perfectly secure hiding-place, as you observe, and my treasure is safe."

The officer stared in wonder at the riches revealed, while the chief told one of his men to hand over the bags he had brought.

This was done and the treasures were soon packed snugly in a bag.

"Now, lieutenant, I will place you and your men in one of your boats and anchor it, for I do not care to have my schooner turn honest, so will burn her."

"Men, scatter your fire torches about the vessel."

Three of the men obeyed, the fourth taking up the bag of valuables, while the chief led the prisoner from the cabin to the deck.

There they found the coxswain and his prisoners, and into the schooner's boat alongside all were placed.

"Now, men, fire the craft below decks," ordered the chief.

This was done, and retreating to their cutter they towed the boat with the prisoners in it a cable's length away and dropped the anchor overboard.

"Good night, lieutenant."

"My compliments to the frigate's commander, for whose benefit I light up the river to show him the Red Wings in port," and with a word to his men the crew bent to their oars and sent the cutter rapidly down the river.

They had not gone far before flames were seen shooting up out of the cabin of the doomed schooner.

Then the alarm was sounded on the frigate and boats were rapidly sent to the burning vessel, but she was in flames before they reached her and they dared not board, so rowed to the boat with the imprisoned crew.

Then they knew the cause, and the frigate was hailed and the Red Wings was seen wearing around under full sail and heading down the river.

The frigate's guns were trained as well as they could be, but they thundered forth in vain, doing no damage to the beautiful vessel that went flying toward the sea after her work of mischief.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

OUTWITTED.

THE commandant of the post, who had invited the buccaneer to dine with him the next day, under the impression that it was Captain Carr of the Restless brig-of-war, was awakened from his sleep some time after midnight by the roar of heavy guns.

He at once suspected that it came from outside, at sea; but this was soon shown to be a mistake, as the sounds came thundering down the river.

"Those heavy guns can come from on board the frigate alone."

"What the mischief is to pay up the river?" he said, and the whole fort were turned out for action, not knowing what might occur.

"Can it have been the brig, sir?" asked the adjutant.

"Why should the Restless kick up such a row?"

"But, perhaps it was not the Restless, sir."

"Adjutant, you are inspired!"

"It could not have been the Restless, but some craft that ran in for mischief, and knowing of the coming of Carr's brig, played it on us."

"I hope we will not find we are a pack of idiots."

The adjutant thought it likely that they would make just such a discovery, but wisely refrained from saying so in the then humor of the good-natured major.

"Well, we'll be ready, and she has got to come out, unless the broadsides of the frigate have done for her, and we must retrieve any mistakes we have made."

"But see that red glare on the sky, Harcourt."

"Yes, sir, it seems as though the town was on fire."

And so all stood ready and awaiting events.

The firing had ceased, but the red glare grew brighter and brighter.

What it meant was only conjecture.

The light was distinctly seen at the fort, and all were congratulating themselves if any vessel attempted to run by they would have a chance to see her distinctly.

So on they waited, the wind increasing to half a gale, and blowing directly down the river brought heavy clouds of smoke into the faces of the men at the guns.

Suddenly there was heard a loud explosion up the river, which told that the schooner had blown up, and after the glare dense darkness followed.

And from the darkness and smoke, out upon the river, came a hail:

"Ahoy the fort!"

"Ay, ay, who hails?"

"My compliments to Major Wainright, and regrets that I cannot dine with him to-morrow, as I am forced to put to sea."

"Is that you, Carr?" shouted the major.

"No, I am Kent, the Buccaneer, of the Red Wings," came back the reply from the brig, which had now swept by the fort like a flash, all sail set that would catch a capful of the stiff breeze.

"Fire!" yelled the major, and the fort guns opened rapidly and heavily.

But the Red Wings had run in close to the right shore, under cover of the smoke, and the iron hail went flying down the river, failing to do any damage.

The Red Wings held on, running at a twelve-knot pace, and was soon safe, having run the gantlet unharmed, and left the officers of the fort in a state of mind bordering on frenzy.

An hour after the frigate came by, crowded with canvas, in pursuit, and Major Wainright learned what had taken place up the river as she swept along.

But when the dawn came the Red Wings was hull down ahead of the frigate, which returned to port, realizing the hopelessness of the chase.

As she dropped anchor off the fort, her commander greeted Major Wainright, who had just received by courier from Boston, the news of Kent's deeds in that town, and loud and deep were the denunciations of the buccaneer.

The Red Wings, meanwhile, headed southward, her destination the Island Retreat, but Captain Kent's determination to pick up any valuable prizes on the way that might be met with.

The crew were in the best of humors, for the money for the sail of the Carrier Dove's cargo and the vessel itself, had been divided among them, with a share in the treasure which Captain Kent had regained so daringly.

The cruise southward was a series of rich captures for the Red Wings, and after two months' sail she ran into the island harbor one night loaded with booty.

The signals that all was right ashore having been given and answered, Captain Kent landed at once and had the prisoner Verdi sent ashore to the lock-up.

The Island Captain met him at the landing and answered his first inquiry.

"Well, is Rapier and his fellow traitors safe?"

"Yes, Senor Chief."

"When you visit them at breakfast tell them to prepare for death before sunset."

"Yes, senor."

"And place this other traitor with them—yes, and let them know their fate now."

"I will, chief," and the Island Captain led the prisoner away to the lock-up, where Rapier the mutineer officer and eleven of his men who had survived their wounds, were held in irons.

They awoke with a start when the door opened in the middle of the night, and they beheld the Island Captain with a lantern.

"What is it, senor?" asked Officer Rapier.

"More company for you, Senor Rapier."

"Poor devil!"

"So I say."

"Who is he?"

"Verdi, the coxswain of the Red Wings."

"Ah! has the ship returned?"

"Half an hour since."

"What has the chief to say?"

"Very little that you will wish to hear; but the men tell me that the cruise has been the richest one ever sailed, for they come back with belts full of gold and the brig full of booty."

"This can hardly interest me now."

"No, not when you hear my orders."

"What are they?"

"To tell you and your men that you are to die before sunset to-morrow night."

"Ah! but I have expected death for a long while now, and am ready," was the brave response.

But a howl went up from the others that told they were not so well prepared.

Just then the guards brought Verdi in, for he had walked slowly, ironed as he was, and the Island Captain said:

"Here is Verdi, Senor Rapier, and he is also to die: but he can tell you of the Red Wings's last cruise, I guess."

And there in the darkness all listened to Verdi's story, for no one could sleep after the news they had heard that on the morrow death stared them irrevocably in the face.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE TRAITORS' DOOM.

THE morning dawned upon the buccaneers' Island Retreat, with a feeling of excitement upon all, though it was subdued.

Men spoke in low tones, women in whispers and even the voices of the playing children were hushed and low.

The Red Wings had returned.

She had brought with her another traitor, not a mutineer, but one whose crime was even more heinous than mutiny.

It had been whispered about, the whole story, how Verdi, trusted by his chief, had been made acting mate of a prize, and reaching Boston had

sought to sell his commander and comrades for gold.

All knew the story before the sun was two hours high.

They knew that the brig had come home loaded with booty, and this was a joy to their hearts.

They knew that the chief had given the word that the traitor Verdi and Rapier and his fellow mutineers were to die ere the sun went down on that day.

They knew that Captain Kent was a man of his word, at least all who had served with him had discovered this to be a fact.

The Red Wings lay at anchor in the harbor, her sable flag at half-mast, and all upon her decks seemed subdued.

The chief's headquarters flag, a white hand grasping a sea cutlass in a black field, also was at half-mast over his cabin ashore.

His door was closed and Inca, who was seen near the cabin, would not disturb him and no one else dared without good reason.

The flag floating over the guard-house on the hill, a black field with a pair of red manacles and a chain in the center, was at half-mast.

The prisoners were sullen and hopeless, all except Rapier, who was singing Spanish ballads accompanying himself upon a mandolin.

He had tried his best, during the absence of the chief, to get the men to mutiny and proclaim him their leader, and he promised to sail in the lugger, get a large crew and returning capture the Red Wings, when she came into the harbor, suspecting no trouble.

But the men feared the absent chief too much to think of obeying, and the Island Captain had reported to Kent just what Rapier had urged them to do.

"Did any of them listen to his plans with a view of sanctioning them?" asked Kent quietly.

"Conrado urged it, as Rapier was to make him his second in command," was the answer.

At noon the door of the chief's quarters opened and he came forth.

Inca had his breakfast ready, and the Island Captain came to make his report!

"Take a file of men and arrest Conrado, carrying him to the guard-house," was the order that startled the Island Captain.

But he obeyed it promptly, and as he departed the people began to assemble, men, women and children, to welcome the chief home.

The booty had been brought from the brig and was placed in front of the stone house near headquarters, so that all could see it, and they gazed on with a delight which made their welcome of the chief far more hearty.

As they stood there, the Island Captain passed with Conrado a prisoner.

He was the very semblance of what a villain should be, and he shouted as he went by:

"Ho, mates, all of you! Kent intends to put me to death unless you rally to my aid.

"Follow my lead, and I'll enrich you all!"

The crowd moved uneasily, and the Island Captain forced the prisoner rapidly along.

Then the crowd's eyes turned upon the chief, who said in his cool way:

"Do as you deem best, my people, for if you are tired of my lead, as that man is, put me out of the way."

There were a few who were ready for anything, but several of the old crew of the Red Wings shouted out cheers for Kent, and they were given with a will.

The day dragged slowly away to the people, rapidly to the doomed men, whose number had been augmented by the coming of Conrado.

They greeted him with a reckless yell, and in their desperation began to laugh in the face of fate.

As the sun neared the western horizon, the crew of the Red Wings came marching up from the shore, led by Santo and Benito.

All were armed with cutlasses and pistols, and as they came to the guard-house, they halted, and the doomed men were led forth, all heavily ironed.

The march was begun to the center of the island, where was the burying-ground, and there had been dug in a row the graves for the doomed men.

There were fourteen of them, and the sailors, with their prisoners, halted near, while the crowd formed in three sides of a square, one side being left open.

The crew of the Red Wings formed in double line in front of the open graves, the people making the other two sides of the square.

"There comes the chief!"

"Now, mates, die like men."

It was Rapier who spoke, his tall form enabling him to overlook the heads of the crowd and behold the chief coming toward the spot, where all awaited him.

He came along with his quick, firm step, head erect, and face as calm as a May moon.

Behind him followed Inca, the Indian.

He passed through the opening made for him, Inca at his heels, and stood facing the graves.

Then he gave an order to Santo, and the prisoners, ironed hands and feet, were marched around and placed in their position at the foot of each grave, Rapier on the right, Verdi next to him, then Conrado and the other eleven.

All were as white as ghosts, but Rapier's manner was indifferent in the extreme.

At another command from the chief Benito marched out at the head of the execution squad.

They were those known as the Marines of the Red Wings, thirty in number, and all armed with muskets.

They took their stand in front of the chief, facing the doomed men, and were told off as to whom they were to fire upon.

Then the chief took his stand at the right of the line, and his clear voice was heard by all:

"My people, these men, standing over their graves, have been traitors to our League, and I have sentenced them to die, and so shall always punish those who are traitors to this band."

Then his voice rung like a bugle as he commanded:

"Execution squad, attention!"

"Ready!"

"Aim!"

"Fire!"

The muskets flashed almost as one weapon, and when the smoke lifted the doomed men were seen to have fallen back into their graves, which were quickly filled, while over them was raised a gallows on which was a placard with the legend:

"THE GRAVES OF TRAITORS."

Two weeks after the Red Wings set sail upon another cruise.

CHAPTER L. THE LAST CRUISE.

THE fine sloop-of-war Emerald had been started upon a lengthy cruise, and at the last minute Captain Roland had received orders which read:

"As Midshipman Claude Cassiday, lately appointed, and for a long while a capture among the Bahama Buccaneers, is ordered for duty on board your vessel, it might be well for you to cruise for a few weeks in the waters of the Bahamas, as there is good reason for believing that Midshipman Cassiday is a good pilot in those waters and can render you important service."

The Emerald, obeying these orders, was sailing along one afternoon when a sail was sighted a league and a half away.

The stranger was becalmed, while the light breeze the Emerald had, brought her into view.

The wind was dying out, and Claude Cassiday, who stood by the side of Captain Roland, had just warned him that there would be a tornado before night.

The vessel sighting the frigate, and being becalmed, while the Emerald held a slight breeze yet, got her boats out quickly and began to tow away with all the speed she could, to keep out of range of the big guns which would be brought to bear upon her.

"May I take your glass, sir, and go aloft to have a better look at yonder craft?" said Midshipman Cassiday.

Captain Roland relinquished the glass in silence, and soon from aloft came a hail:

"Ho the deck!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"That is a brig, and the Buccaneer Red Wings, captured from Captain Hartwell."

It was hard to suppress the cheer at the midshipman's words, and Captain Roland called out:

"You are sure, Cassiday?"

"Yes, sir, for I can see the red wings on her sails."

Then Claude came to the deck and soon after the wind died out completely.

"We are in range, sir."

It was Claude who spoke, and Captain Roland said:

"Captain Carr said you were a wonderful long-range gunner—can you hit yonder vessel?"

"I can try, sir."

The gun was cleared for action, and Claude sighted it.

The first shot hit close to the starboard side of the brig, while the second fell as close to port.

The third carried away both topmasts, and the yell of the Emerald's crew was heard upon the brig.

"Bravo, Cassiday! that was the best shot I ever saw. Try it again!" cried Captain Roland.

A fourth shot and a fifth fell short.

"She is towing out of range, sir."

"Then I'll order out my boats."

"Pardon, sir, but it would not be safe, for the storm may break in an instant."

"The brig has her boats out."

"Yes, sir; with her it is a case of life or death, and they are accustomed to meeting tornadoes."

"I guess you are right, Cassiday, but if it comes?"

"We will get it first, sir, and drive on with it directly toward the brig."

"But she can outfoot us."

"Her masts were weakened, I am sure, sir, by the shot that carried away her upper spars, and in the tornado you can carry more sail than she can."

"And her captain knows these waters, and will dodge in among the islands."

"Where he goes, sir, I can follow him if you will trust me as pilot, for I know these waters well, also."

"Bravo, my lad! I will trust you," was the ready reply of the Emerald's captain.

The Red Wings began to still draw away with her boats out ahead, but a flaw of wind lasting for ten minutes sent the Emerald up toward her rapidly.

"Now, sir, look out for that ugly cloud," said Claude; and his warning was just in time, for the cloud burst as they gazed, and began to drag along the sea directly down upon them.

It was a moment of awful suspense, and all waited breathlessly for the coming of the hurricane, the Emerald having only her lower storm-sails set.

"See the brig, sir!"

The Red Wings had called in her boats, and they were run up to the davits and made fast with a celerity that won the admiration of the American crew, and caused Captain Roland to remark:

"You were right, Cassiday, we could not have done that; but ready all!"

As he spoke the winds struck the Emerald, followed by the tempest with its rush of waters.

All seemed as dark as night, but the Emerald met the shock splendidly and then bounded before the tempest as though in terror.

"Brig ho!" cried Claude Cassiday, and he pointed to the Red Wings, which was trying to dodge the Emerald by lying under bare poles.

But the Emerald headed toward her, and instantly sail was set and the brig bounded away, running straight for a pass between two islands.

"Is there a pass there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know it?"

"Yes, sir."

"And can follow him?"

"I can, sir."

"Do so, Cassiday," and the young midshipman went forward and took his stand in the fore-shrouds, while officers were stationed along the ship to repeat his orders.

Straight for the pass, and an appalling one it looked in that wild tempest, rushed the brig, and not a mile astern came the vessel-of-war, both running along with terrific speed.

"He is going too far to try the other pass, sir."

"What other pass?"

"There is one close to the island, sir, where we could not go with our depth, and I do not believe he can; but if he does he cuts off two leagues.—Ha! I thought so, for he is trying to run for the middle pass, but he cannot make it now—the Red Wings is doomed, Captain Roland."

As Claude spoke the vessel was seen to rush headlong upon a reef and the next instant struck it with a force that made timber of the beautiful craft.

The "Pirate Middy" had driven her to her doom.

Then he ran the Emerald under the island's lee and the anchors were let go to ride out the storm.

The next morning not a vestige of the beautiful vessel Red Wings could be found, and the Emerald sailed for the Island Retreat, piloted by Claude Cassiday, and the outlawed people there were sent in the two luggers as prisoners to the United States.

And thus had Kent the Buccaneer fulfilled his prophecy that he would never live to be hanged.

CHAPTER LI.

MAN OVERBOARD!

THE young midshipman who had entered the service of his country under such bright auspices, being appointed as he was, for his daring in swimming out to the brig-of-war Restless, from the pirate island among the Bahamas, and piloting her to safety, had not found his life a pleasant existence on the vessel to which he had been ordered.

The two lieutenants, whose conversation regarding the new midshipman opens this story, had believed that they alone knew of his antecedents, that he had been for years not only a pirate captain, but an officer on board the terrible buccaneer Red Wings.

But in some way it leaked out and in secret Claude Cassiday was called "the Pirate Middy."

Human nature is the same the world over, and there were envious ones who hated the boy for his splendid seamanship and because he had won his promotion.

There were others who were too weak to take his part and a few who were indifferent.

Several were his friends, among them Lieutenants Norton Willis, and Ralph Carson.

The commander of the Emerald was indifferent to everything outside of discipline, and his own selfishness, but the youth had attracted his attention by his strict discharge of the duties devolving upon him.

The midshipman found that he was looked upon as an outsider, an interloper, and he shunned his comrades, though he treated all with courtesy.

It was found that he was a splendid seaman, and a good officer, and the crew, with whom he at once became popular, averred that he was capable of commanding the sloop-of-war as well as any officer aboard ship.

One night when a storm swept up suddenly,

the sloop was caught under full sail and went over so far as to throw a man from the yard, who lost his balance as he was trying, with others, to furl sail.

"Man overboard!" shouted a dozen voices, while the boatswain cried:

"It's Mike Dunn and he can't swim!"

In an instant a form went over the stern and that it was an officer all knew, but who was not discovered.

"Man overboard!" again arose the cry, and the sloop was brought up into the wind and Lieutenant Carson, the officer of the deck, commanded:

"Lower away the life-boat and I want volunteers to man her, for this is an ugly sea!"

A cheer went up and a dozen brave fellows sprung into the life-boat, while Lieutenant Nor-Willis took the tiller himself.

With a cheer from the crew the life-boat pulled away over the dark waters, now being lashed into fury by the gale which had swept down like an avalanche upon the vessel, coming from no one had hardly seen where.

The sails had now been furled and the sloop-of-war was lying to under easy canvas.

A rush of tempestuous waters had come with the gale, and the wind was growing momentarily fiercer, the waves were becoming wilder.

Dark clouds had obscured the heavens, and the waters were equally as black, but for the foam of the waves lighting them here and there.

All eyes were strained upon the sea, to catch a sight of the two men, the seaman who had been thrown from aloft and the officer who had sprung overboard to save him.

They had driven rapidly astern, and down to leeward the life-boat had gone, to be almost immediately lost to sight from the sloop.

The wild lurch of the sloop when struck by the storm had brought every officer and man on deck, even to the captain.

"Who went overboard?" asked Captain Roland.

"A seaman, sir, by the name of Mike Dunn, and he cannot swim," an officer replied.

"And I heard that an officer leaped over to save him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who was he?"

"No one seems to know, sir."

"Mr. Carson, what officer went to that man's rescue?"

"I have just ordered a report, sir, to find out."

The officers crowded aft now, and then came the report:

"Midshipman Claude Cassiday is missing sir."

A cheer rung out from the men and a midshipman sneered.

"See they cheer in the hopes that he'll be lost, Cassiday is so unpopular."

"You are mistaken, Mayo, that was a cheer of admiration for his pluck," another said quickly.

"I don't believe the Pirate Middy has gone," again sneered Mayo.

Just then the heavens were rent in twain by a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a crash of thunder that seemed to shake the ship.

All eyes looking leeward beheld the life-boat by the livid glare, a quarter of a mile away, and it was pulling with a steady stroke still further to leeward.

"They must see them," cried Lieutenant Carson eagerly.

"Yes, Willis will find them, if any one will," the captain said, and he added:

"Burn a blue light at intervals, Mr. Carson, so they will not lose us in this blackness which is intense."

The ship soon was resplendent under the burning of a blue light, and the life-boat was seen further off.

A lightning's flash soon after once more revealed the boat and a cheer broke from the crew as it was seen broadside to, as though picking some one up, or coming about to return to the sloop.

But the winds were increasing in fierceness, and the sea was beginning to send mountain waves down upon the sloop, until Captain Roland said:

"The boat can never pull back in the teeth of this gale, Carson."

"It will be desperate work if it does, sir."

"That boy was foolhardy to go to Dunn's rescue in the teeth of such a gale."

"I have hopes that he will be saved, sir," answered Lieutenant Carson.

The sea and wind were now growing so wild that all on board began to fear for the safety even of the life-boat, and as though to show that they had reason, suddenly, from the waters seemingly, there went flying heavenward a rocket.

"Willis is calling for aid!" cried Lieutenant Carson, and his words fell like a pall upon every heart.

CHAPTER LII.

THE RESCUE.

CLAUDE CASSIDAY had gone on board the sloop-of-war Emerald, determined to do his duty in everything.

He was proud of having won his appointment,

and he intended to prove to his superiors and inferiors that he deserved it.

He was ambitious, and to him the position of midshipman was the stepping-stone to higher rank, which he intended to win.

The youth was saddened by his earlier life.

His having been, by force of circumstances, compelled to become not only a pirate, but to do duty as a young officer on board the schooner Red Wings, he now saw in the light of coming home and meeting those he loved, in all its horror and crime.

He could not but feel that he was looked upon by some of his messmates with aversion, or pretended aversion at least, and he overheard quite often that he was spoken of as the "Pirate Middy."

He chafed under this, yet felt that at least he had been innocent of wrong-doing, and determined to bear the sorrow his life of forced outlawry had put upon him without a murmur.

It was not long before he felt his superiority as a seaman to his messmates, and muttered to himself:

"In making me a thorough sailor my pirate experience at least was beneficial to me."

Avoiding noticing slurs and innuendoes, the youth got along fairly well, and devoted himself wholly to study and duty, to keep out of trouble and away from those who were so ungenerous and unmanly in their action toward him.

Upon the night when the sudden storm swept down upon the sloop, with but little warning, the lad had been on deck, though not on duty.

His practiced eyes had noted there was trouble brewing, and he had walked up to Lieutenant Carson, and saluting politely, said, in a low tone, that he meant no one else to overhear:

"Pardon me, Lieutenant Carson, but may I ask you to observe the heavens and sea off the starboard beam?"

Lieutenant Carson started, glanced in the direction indicated and discovered that there seemed trouble coming out of that quarter.

He turned his night glass also toward the threatening quarter and said earnestly:

"I thank you sincerely, Cassiday, for there is harm in those clouds."

Then his voice rung out loudly:

"All hands ahoy to take in sail!"

The watch sprung to obey, and the sloop was not yet stripped of sail when the storm struck her, almost throwing her upon her beam-ends.

But for the warning of the young midshipman the ship might have gone down with all on board, and this no one realized better than did Lieutenant Ralph Carson.

The fall of seaman Mike Dunn from the yard into the sea had been seen by Claude Cassiday and with perfect confidence in his splendid powers as a swimmer, and hearing the cry, he had sprung at once overboard to rescue him, feeling assured that the sloop would come to immediately and a life-boat be launched to come to his aid.

Then too the ambition filled his heart that the brave act would go well toward a promotion some day in the future.

When he leaped into the sea Dunn rose upon a wave not twenty feet away.

"All right, my man, struggle for life and I'll save you," he called out cheerily.

The seaman obeyed, and a man of great coolness and pluck he did not lose his presence of mind.

A moment more and he felt his arm grasped firmly just as he was going beneath the waves, downward to his death, it seemed to him.

"You cannot swim, Dunn, I believe?"

The words were as cool as though spoken upon the quarter-deck.

"No, sir, not a stroke, blessing your brave heart, sir!"

"Very well, I can swim, and for both of us."

"Do as I tell you."

"Yes, sir."

"There, place your arm over my shoulders, and ride the waves with me."

"We are in the broad Atlantic, sir," said Dunn, realizing the depth beneath them and the hundreds of leagues of water all around them.

The midshipman laughed, and said:

"All right, so is the sloop, and a boat will reach us soon, so keep your eyes open."

"Ay, ay, sir."

The seaman found a strong support in the arm on the shoulder of the midshipman, and feeling that he was in no danger of being drowned immediately, he glanced out over the waters.

But only when the flash of lightning came did they discover the life-boat, and loudly Dunn cried:

"Boat, ho!"

"Ay, ay, my man, I saw her," and raising his voice, he gave a long, loud hail.

The seaman also hailed at the command of the midshipman, and Mike Dunn never gave such a yell of joy in his life, as back over the waters came the response in Lieutenant Willis's well-known voice:

"Ay, ay, we are coming!"

The lieutenant had decided well on his course, after leaving the sloop, and fortunately was bearing right down upon the midshipman and the seaman.

Another hail from the midshipman, followed

by Dunn's, showed exactly where they were, while the blue light, though far off, dimly lighted up the sea a short distance ahead.

"Steady, men, steady!"

"Now, you two men forward, stand by to throw your lines!"

"Cast!"

The ropes were thrown in obedience to the order of the lieutenant, and one was caught by the midshipman, who quickly knotted it about the waist of the seaman, and called out:

"Haul in!"

"Back water hard!" commanded Lieutenant Willis, and the oarsmen obeyed, while the two men hauled hard on the rope, and the next moment the seaman Dunn was drawn on board.

"Where is Mr. Cassiday?" cried the lieutenant.

"Here, sir," and the midshipman clambered over the stern of the life-boat to a seat in the stern sheets, while his hand was grasped by his superior with the words:

"My brave friend Cassiday, God bless you!"

A rousing cheer came from all in the boat too, at the rescue, and then Claude Cassiday said:

Lieutenant, the storm is growing wilder and we can never pull back to the sloop."

"You are right, but fortunately I have rockets aboard and they must come to us."

The oarsmen realized how impossible it was to pull in the teeth of that gale and sea, and a moment after a rocket was lighted and sent skyward.

Another and another followed until the sloop burned a blue light and she was seen driving down toward the life-boat before the gale.

The sloop drove by like a race-horse, the crew cheering the life-boat loudly, and then laying to to leeward awaited its coming.

It swept by, ropes were thrown and caught, and coming under the stern, one by one the brave men were drawn on board and saved from death.

When it came Claude Cassiday's turn the crew of the sloop shouted themselves hoarse, but among the officers there was a marked lack of enthusiasm, while Bob Mayo remarked with a sneer:

"He'll ask the President for an epaulette for this."

CHAPTER LIII.

THE THREE DUELS.

FOR over two years had the American sloop-of-war Emerald been on her cruise in foreign seas.

In all that time had Claude Cassiday had to suffer coldness and sneers from those who should have been his friends, for his was a noble nature to win friendship, and those who did like him were deeply attached to him.

His brave rescue of seaman Dunn had gained for him a more bitter feeling among certain middies, and his having on several other occasions won praise from his captain on the quarter-deck seemed to add to the insults.

At length orders came for the Emerald to return home.

She was in a Spanish port at the time, and the vessel that brought the orders had a demand upon Captain Roland for some of his officers and men to fill her complement.

Among those detached was Claude Cassiday, and he was to be given a post as acting junior lieutenant as an honor he had deservedly won.

But though Claude Cassiday had borne with insults and coldness all through the cruise, he did not intend to leave the Emerald without resenting them to the three who had been his worst persecutors and foes.

There was a dinner given ashore among the steering officers, and when it was over, three of those present were handed notes, all of which read alike.

They were from Claude Cassiday and read as follows:

"Sir:—

"Through my whole career as your messmate I have endeavored to treat you as a gentleman, and in return you have insulted me most shamefully."

"As I am now leaving the Emerald to go on board the Cricket, I wish to say that I consider you the coward you have accused me of being because I have not resented your insults on board ship."

"We are ashore now, and I am wholly at your service, if you have the courage to demand satisfaction for the word coward I throw in your teeth."

"I refer you to Midshipman De Vigne."

"CLAUDE CASSIDAY."

Poor fellow, he had no one to advise him, and he had turned at the last to strike back.

De Vigne was a firebrand and anxious to have Cassiday avenge his wrongs, and so had urged his writing the letter.

It was not ten minutes after before De Vigne had three demands upon his time, in the seconds of the midshipmen who had received Cassiday's letter.

They were surprised to see that he had sent three letters, and they wished to draw lots for one to act for all, but this De Vigne would not hear to, speaking for his principal.

So the three duels were arranged to take place there on the shore in the moonlight.

Swords were the weapons to be used, and the

whole party, nearly all flushed with wine, adjourned to the beach.

De Vigne arranged with the different seconds for the meeting, and Bob Mayo, the bitterest of Claude's foes, was to come third on the list, and he remarked so all could hear:

"If Burton or Carter does not finish him I will, for our navy should not be disgraced by having in it a pirate middy."

The first one to face the "Pirate Middy" was Midshipman Carter, and he found himself instantly disarmed and the point of the sword of his adversary at his throat, while all heard the words:

"Mr. Carter, I give you your life, and I shall expect an apology from you."

"You shall have it, Cassiday, with all my heart, and my hand in friendship too," was the manly reply, and the hands of the middies were clasped.

Midshipman Burton was next on the list, and he was known to be a splendid swordsman, Mayo being his only superior, for Claude Cassiday had not shown himself as a superior hand with a blade, whatever his other accomplishments might be.

Burton was confident, but only for a few seconds after the two blades crossed, for he was disarmed with an ease that caused several to remark in a low tone:

"Cassiday's been playing off on us, for he is a terror with a blade."

"Accept your life, Mr. Burton, for I am glad to give it to you."

"And you accept my apologies, Cassiday, for all my ungenerous and unmanly treatment of you."

"Certainly, it is forgotten," was the ready reply.

"Now it's my turn, and no quarter shown, no apologies given, is my motto."

Every one heard the words of Bob Mayo, and all knew he was a man of his word.

Cassiday heard it too, but made no reply and took his stand.

"If he masters Mayo he is a wonder," said a middy, and such was the general belief.

The swords crossed with a ring, and a minute after some one said:

"See! he is playing with Mayo!"

This was true, for Claude Cassiday the next instant sent the sword of his enemy flying through the air.

Quickly he was turning away when Bob Mayo cried out:

"I don't take my life from you, sir! I demand a meeting with pistols."

"As you please, sir," was the reply, and the preliminaries were arranged by the seconds.

Then came the placing in position, and next followed the ominous command to fire.

The pistols flashed together, and Bob Mayo fell dead, while his bullet cut through Claude Cassiday's arm.

A pall fell upon the assembled young officers, and Claude Cassiday broke the deathlike silence with the words, uttered with the utmost coolness:

"I am wounded, De Vigne, so will go up to the hotel."

"Will you come with me?"

Then the middies crowded about him, exonerating him from all blame, and they went aboard ship to explain matters to Captain Roland, and carried with them the dead body of their comrade.

But Captain Roland was a strict disciplinarian, a bitter foe to dueling, and revoking the order sending Claude Cassiday upon the Cricket, he sent an officer ashore to arrest him, and back to his native land sailed the young midshipman, a prisoner on board the Emerald.

CHAPTER LIV.

UNDER A CLOUD.

MRS. CASSIDAY had heard that the Emerald was to be ordered home, and she and pretty Helen were counting the days until they would see Midshipman Claude.

A vessel-of-war had come in and reported that the Emerald was to sail the day after it left, but was to go by several ports on the way, so would hardly arrive under a month.

Upon this vessel had come Harold Hartwell.

Though cruel to others, Fate had been kind to him, for his captain had died at sea and the senior lieutenant had gone home on sick leave, leaving him in command of the vessel for a year past.

He had done so well that after his arrival the naval secretary had complimented him and handed him his commission as a captain.

He had also been given a three months' leave, and hastened to sail for Boston where his vessel was to go out of commission.

Upon his arrival at his home he failed to recognize in his once pretty residence the grand mansion with its towers, many rooms, piazzas and beautiful grounds.

But it was his house and he entered to meet his wife and daughter Celeste, the latter verging upon beautiful maidenhood.

"I am really glad to see you, Hartwell, really glad," said Mrs. Hartwell, resplendent in a superb dress and diamonds.

"We waited dinner for you, though I have

quite a number of friends to dine with me to-night."

Such was his wife's welcome; but it was made up for by the warmth of Celeste's greeting.

"I would not let mother have dinner, papa, after I had seen your signal on the vessel that came in," said Celeste.

So the returned sailor, after nearly three years' absence, went in to dine with his wife's friends, many of whom he did not know.

But that night the husband and wife had a talk together, for he had said in a manner that showed he was in deadly earnest:

"Helen, I must have a talk with you before I retire to-night."

"Well, let it be here, for Celeste has retired."

Then as she threw herself defiantly into a chair, she added:

"Well, what have you to say, Hartwell?"

"I would know about that treasure."

"Ah, yes, the treasure left you by Lieutenant Claude Cassiday, and which you failed on three cruises to secure?"

"Yes, you got it?"

"Certainly!"

"How?"

"I copied your charts and directions, and so decided to venture myself."

"Did you dare do it?"

"Certainly I dared venture, and I got it too."

"So I should think, and have squandered it too from appearances about me."

"Oh, no, I have not spent the tenth of it, Hartwell."

"Was it so large, then?"

"It is a splendid fortune."

"Tell me how you got it, for I begin to look upon you, Helen, as a remarkable woman."

"Others have always so considered me," and she then told the story of her clever and daring getting of the Cassiday treasure.

"But how do you get money on the gems?"

"Easily, for I go to that old fraud Goldstein, am veiled, and he believes I am a stranger in town, and I make him give me as near the value as I can for all I sell him."

"And where is the balance?"

"I have it secure in a secret closet, and will go over it with you at any time you desire, giving you an account of what I have spent."

"But what do people think?"

"That we have inherited fortunes both of us, and it's a grand thing to be rich, Hartwell."

"But oh at what a cost!" he groaned.

"Bah! what do you care for a life or two to gain so much gold?"

"I got it without the loss of a life even, and if I had not I would not have fretted myself into the grave."

"I have a conscience, Helen."

"It would seem so from the silvery locks you are getting, for it is not age that has whitened your hair—I shall be called an old man's darling if you get much older," and the woman laughed maliciously.

"And you have bought a yacht?"

"Yes, and enjoy cruising immensely, for we always have friends to accompany Celeste, her governess and myself."

"Yes, you are going at a terrific pace, Helen; but I saw your yacht, as I came into the harbor, and she will at least be some comfort to me while at home," he said sadly.

Then he added:

"Do you know that Cassiday's son is a midshipman on the Emerald?"

"Yes."

"She is coming home."

"Well?"

"He will get leave and be home while I am."

"Yes."

"And I fear he will recognize me as the Captain Harold who was seeking a treasure on the Buccaneers' Island when he was there."

"Not a bit of it, since you have let your beard grow and your hair has turned almost white."

"Then too he could hardly look for Captain Harold, a gold-hunter, in Captain Hartwell of the navy."

"Don't worry about that, Hartwell."

"You really give me cheer, Helen."

"Why not, when your fears are only your guilty conscience; but it is late," and the beautiful woman yawned.

Such was the coming home of the man who had betrayed his friend and brother officer, by taking the treasure he had left half of only to him, and in trying to secure it had taken life after life, committed sin after sin.

He had returned home, and near him was the family of the dead lieutenant who had left the secret of the legacy to him of a hidden pirate treasure.

The son of Claude Cassiday, a midshipman in the navy, would soon be home also, and Harold Hartwell recalled how the boy had aided his escape from the pirates, and then been cruelly deserted by him.

He recalled how afterward when he had crossed his path he had landed him upon a barren island to perish.

He knew him not as "Captain Harold," but might not the boy recognize him after all?

The thought was terrible to him to contemplate, and conscience gnawed hard at his heart.

Three weeks after the coming into port of

Captain Hartwell's ship, the Emerald arrived in Boston Harbor and Claude Cassiday had returned home.

CHAPTER LV.

UNDER A CLOUD.

THE Emerald swept grandly up the harbor, one pleasant afternoon, and Mrs. Cassiday and Helen were wild with joy, hoping soon to clasp the loved son and brother to their hearts.

The anchor was let go, boats passed to and from the shore, but still he came not.

The sun set, night came on, and the faces of mother and daughter paled with dread.

At length some one entered the little gate, and they sprung forward to meet—Midshipman De Vigne.

"I have come, Mrs. Cassiday, with a message from Claude," he said, in an embarrassed way.

"He is on duty, then, sir, and cannot come home just now? but we are glad to welcome you, for Claude spoke in his letters of your being his friend."

"Yes, Mrs. Cassiday, I was his friend, and am his friend; but the truth is, Claude is under arrest."

The mother started, and tears came into Helen's eyes.

"I must tell you the whole story, Mrs. Cassiday; but let me first say that from the cause which led to Claude's arrest, he made friends of men who had been his worst foes."

"I will tell you the whole sad story, keeping nothing back."

"But Claude is not ill, sir?"

"Only at heart, Mrs. Cassiday, at the thought that he may be checked in his brilliant career by being dismissed from the service."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Mrs. Cassiday, and then she said, with forced calmness:

"Now I am ready, Mr. De Vigne, to hear your story."

The young midshipman told it well.

He began at the going on board of the Emerald by Claude, and his treatment from the very first, and how he had been called the Pirate Middy.

He told of the Emerald's run to Southern waters, the sighting of the Red Wings, and chase by night through the storm, when Claude had acted as pilot, and he had been the one to drive the buccaneer craft to destruction.

Then he told of the leaping overboard of Claude to save Seaman Dunn, and at last came to the ordering home of the Emerald and how the young middy had been honored by being selected as an acting lieutenant of the Cricket schooner-of-war.

Next was told the dinner of the middies, of both vessels ashore, the challenge of Claude, who had been driven to the wall by the many insults heaped upon him by the three midshipmen whom he at last brought to face him.

His disarming of the two, with their apologies and proffered friendship, and the threatening words of Mayo were next made known, and then the duel that followed—all was told in a graphic manner by the young midshipman.

"He spared Mayo, and then when a second meeting was demanded, he knew that his life would be the forfeit, for his adversary was a dead shot, and meant to kill him, so he shot him dead."

"My God!" cried Mrs. Cassiday while Helen burst into tears.

"Claude was wounded in the arm, but it has healed now, and he is all right, only this wretched trial he has to undergo; but I believe he will go through all right, so do not worry."

"You are most kind, Mr. De Vigne, and a good, true friend, and you cheer me up I assure you."

"But when will we see Claude?"

"I suppose he will be sent ashore to the Naval Headquarters to-morrow, and as there is a court-martial ordered he will soon be tried."

"I hope so, indeed, so that the suspense may be over."

"If you will come when I send you word, I will arrange for you to see him to-morrow, Mrs. Hartwell."

"You are indeed most kind, sir, and we will be ready whenever you send for us."

Then Midshipman De Vigne arose to take his leave, but he was urged to remain to tea and gladly did so.

The next afternoon Mrs. Cassiday and Helen were allowed to go to Naval Headquarters, whither Claude had been removed, and see the one they so dearly loved.

The meeting between them even De Vigne, who was their escort, and the marine on guard would not witness.

One week after, the court-martial sat and the various cases were tried.

Claude Cassiday came last and those who had been enemies of him and cruel toward him had undergone a wonderful transformation and they were one and all testifiers in his favor.

His whole career was gone over, and when all things were taken into consideration he was cleared with a reprimand, and recommended to be immediately ordered on foreign service for three years.

This was his only punishment, and though it was a sad one for him to leave his mother and

sister alone, it was even more so for them, though they were glad that it was not worse.

To one other the sentence was a joyous one, for it gave to him a respite.

That one was Harold Hartwell, for in three years more, he argued, he would be so changed, should he meet the youth, and Claude have passed through so much, that the fact would be obliterated from his memory, and he could never recall his face and the days of his gold-hunting expeditions.

One week after his trial, and with only one day's leave at home, Claude Cassiday set sail in a frigate bound upon a three years' cruise, first to South America, then around Cape Horn into Chinese seas, and around the young officer on board the ship to which he had been ordered, still hung a mystery, a romance, for he was known still, though not longer in a spirit of unkindness, as the Pirate Middy.

CHAPTER LXI. CONCLUSION.

It was three long years before Claude Cassiday again set foot in his home, and then he returned as a junior lieutenant, having won promotion for his many gallant deeds and splendid services as a sailor and officer.

Captain Harold Hartwell had resigned from the navy meanwhile, and was living a life of luxury at his superb home, which was still the resort of army and navy officers and the aristocrats of Boston.

Celeste was budding into womanhood, and promising to become a most beautiful woman, though people were wont to say that she held some sorrow in her heart;—it was thought that she had already loved some one whom a cruel fate must keep her from forever.

But, the truth was that she had learned that there was a "skeleton in the closet" at home;—that both her father and mother held a secret they would not have the world know.

Often did Celeste go with her father upon his yacht, White Wings, and she always enjoyed such cruises, for then he appeared to be almost a happy man.

But on one occasion the White Wings set sail with a pleasant party, and in running out of the harbor was struck and run down by a vessel coming in.

The boats of the incoming vessel were quickly lowered, and those on the yacht were picked up.

But the White Wings went to the bottom, and when all were assembled on the deck of the vessel that had cut her down there was one found to be missing.

That one was Mrs. Hartwell, the Vailed Voyager for the secret treasure of Lieutenant Claude Cassiday.

She had met her fate upon the very vessel on which she had daringly ventured upon her cruise after the hidden treasure on an island of the Bahamas, and her life had ended in the midst of her reveling in her ill-gotten fortune, while her husband had lived on to feel the torments of that still small voice of conscience which all of his riches would not quiet.

And so the curtain falls, kind reader, upon my romance of lawless lives in the long ago.

THE END.

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